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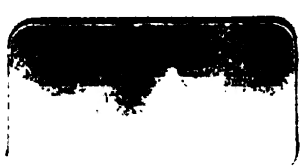

# SHORT STORIES

## A MAGAZINE OF SELECT FICTION

## VOLUME XLIX.

## JANUARY FEBRUARY MARCH

## 1903

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THIS MAGAZINE IS PLANNED TO COVER THE STORY-TELLING FIELD OF THE WORLD, AND ITS SELECTIONS WILL BE OF THE BEST PROCURABLE IN ALL THE VARIOUS LANGUAGES

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*"Were I called upon to designate that class of composition which should best fulfil the demands of high genius--should offer it the most advantageous fields of exertion—should unhesitatingly speak of the short prose tale. The novel is objectionable from its length. As it cannot be read at one sitting, it deprives itself of the immense force derivable from totality."*—EDGAR ALLAN POE.

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# An Unlucky Wish:

## A Fairy Story, by Catulle Mendès. Translated from the French by Virginia Watson. Illustrations by Florence England Nosworthy*

BAREFOOTED, his hair streaming in the wind, a vagabond passed along the road before the king's palace. Young and very handsome with his golden curls, with his large black eyes, lips fresh as roses after rain, and, as if the sun rejoiced in beholding him, there was more light and

*Translated for Short Stories.

brightness in his rags than in the velvets, satins and brocades of the gentlemen and noble ladies assembled in the court of honor.

"Oh! how beautiful she is," he cried, stopping suddenly.

He had caught a glimpse of the Princess Roselinde, who was taking the air at her window, and in truth, it was impossible to find anything on earth more beautiful than she. Motionless, his arms raised above him towards the window, as to an opening in the sky, through which Paradise was peeping, he would have stayed there until evening had not a guard chased him away with a blow from his partisan and harsh words.

He moved on with bent head. Everything about him now seemed sombre, the horizon, the road, the trees in blossom; now that he no longer saw Roselinde, he thought the sun itself dead. He sat down under an oak at the edge of a wood and began to weep.

"Ha, my child, why are you so forlorn?" asked an old woman, who came out of the forest, her back bent under a load of dead branches.

"What good would it do to tell you? You can do nothing for me, my good woman."

"You are mistaken in that," said the old woman, and at that moment she straightened herself up, throwing off her burden, and was no longer a twig-gatherer, but a fairy, beautiful as the day, dressed in a robe of silver, her hair wreathed with flowers and precious stones; as for the dried branches, they had blossomed with green leaves, taken flight and returned to the trees whence they had fallen, and were now full of singing birds.

"Oh! Mistress Fairy," said the vagabond, kneeling, "have pity on my misfortune. Because I chanced to see the king's daughter taking the air at her window my heart has ceased to belong to me; I feel that I shall never love any woman but her."

"Well! said the fairy, "that's no such great misfortune."

"Can there be a greater for me? I shall die if I do not become the princess's husband."

"What prevents you from becoming it? Princess Roselinde is not engaged."

"But Mistress, look at my rags, my bare feet! I am a poor lad who begs on the highway."

"No matter. He who loves sincerely cannot fail to be loved; that is the sweet and eternal law. The king and queen will repulse you with disdain; the courtiers will mock you; but if your affection is real, Roselinde will be touched by it, and one fine evening, when, after having been chased away by the valets and bitten by the dogs, you are weeping in some barn, she will come, blushing and happy, to ask you to share your straw pallet with her."

The lad shook his head, for he could not believe such a miracle possible.

"Take care," replied the fairy, "love does not like to have its power doubted, and it might come to pass that you would be punished in a cruel fashion on account of your little faith. Nevertheless, because you suffer, I am anxious to assist you. Make a wish, I will grant it."

"I wish to be the most puissant prince in the world, that I may marry the princess I adore."

"Ah! why don't you sing a love song under her window, instead of bothering yourself in this way? Well, since I have promised, let it be as you desire. But I must tell you

one thing: when you have ceased to be what you are now, no enchanter, no fairy, not even I, will be able to change you back again; once a prince you will be one forever."

"Do you think Princess Roselinde's royal husband will ever desire to beg his bread on the highway?"

"I hope that you may be happy," said the fairy with a sigh.

Then she touched his shoulders with a golden wand, and suddenly the vagabond was metamorphosed into a magnificent lord, radiant in silk and jewels, mounted on a Hungarian stallion, at the head of a procession of plumed courtiers and warriors in golden armor, blowing trumpets.

## II.

So mighty a prince could not but be received with delight, and for a week tournaments, balls and every kind of festivity which you can imagine was given in his honor. But his heart was not in these pleasures. Every hour of the day and night he thought of Roselinde. When he saw her he felt his heart overflow with delight, when he heard her speak he thought he listened to divine music, and once he almost fainted away with happiness when he took her hand to dance a pavane. One thing troubled him somewhat: she whom he loved seemed to take no notice of the attentions he paid her; most of the time she was silent and melancholy. Nevertheless, he persisted in his plan of asking her in marriage and as you may well believe, Roselinde's royal parents were far from refusing so important a personage. So the vagabond of other days was to possess the most beautiful princess in the world! Such an extraordinary felicity moved him so, that when the king gave his consent he answered by gestures so extravagant as to be little in keeping with the dignity of his rank, and was almost on the point of dancing all alone a pavane before the court. Alas! this great joy was of short duration. Scarcely had she been informed of the paternal wish, than Roselinde fell half-dead in the arms of her maids of honor, and when she came to

herself, cried weeping, with outstretched arms, that she did not want to marry, that she would rather die than espouse this prince.

## III.

The poor lover, in a state of desperation not to be described, and in spite of etiquette, rushed into the chamber whither they had carried the princess, and falling on his knees, stretched his arms out towards her, crying:

"Cruel one, take back your words which are killing me!"

She opened her eyes slowly, replied languidly, but still firmly:

"Prince, nothing will overcome my resolution. I will not marry you."

"What, you are cruel enough to destroy a heart that belongs but to you? What crime have I committed to merit a like punishment? Do you doubt my love? Do you fear that some day I shall cease to adore you? Oh! if you could only read in me, you would no longer have any doubts, any fears. My passion is so ardent that it renders me worthy even of your incomparable loveliness, and if you do not let yourself be moved by my complaints, I shall find no remedy for my unhappiness but in death. Give me hope, Princess, or I shall expire at your feet."

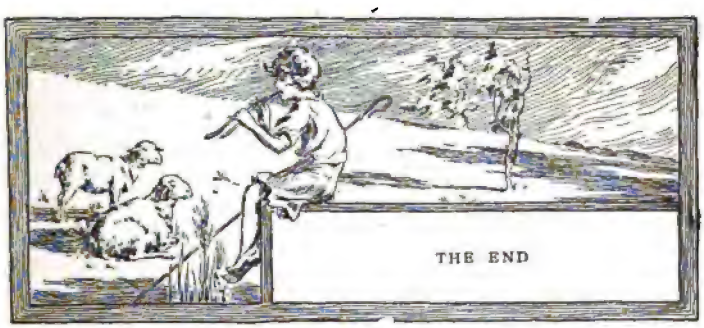
His eloquence did not stop here. He said everything that the most violent sorrow could inspire to a lovesick heart, so much so that Roselinde could not help being touched, but not in the way he desired.

"Unhappy prince," she said, "if pity, in lieu of my affection, can give you any consolation, I tender it gladly. I am

all the more inclined to pity you, that I myself endure the same torments which are breaking your heart."

"What is it that you say, Princess?"

"Alas! if I refuse to marry you, it is because I love with a hopeless love a vagabond with bare feet and windblown hair, who passed one day before my father's palace, who looked at me, and has never come again."



# THE Guerdon of Demetrius: The Story of a Kindly Deed, by Beatrice E. Rice. Illustrations by E. Fuhr.*

DEMETRIUS Mickiewicz—pronounced *Mits-kye-vitch*—stood, shears in hand, at the window of his little shop, looking sadly, ay, longingly across the dreary vista of mud-covered street and cable-tracks to the red brick building on the opposite corner, where a gilded shield, large and aggressively new, marked his rival's dwelling.

The blazonry on the shield-face explained in letters of black that, 'Valeto, Ladies' Tailor,' made street costumes, riding habits, coats, etc. 'Perfect Fit Guaranteed.'

Demetrius's shock of light brown hair, seldom in order even when atoning for his sins at Yum Kippur, would invariably assume a more indignant uprising at the crest of his head whenever he read that sign, and this special evening, to add to his jealous misery, carriage after carriage rolled up and deposited the well-dressed occupants at the door of Valeto.

"Isador! Come here, Isador!" called Demetrius, his deep voice out of all proportion to his size, rendered husky with surcharged feeling, "See, Isador, how great a business is *his*." He caught his partner by his shirt-sleeve and drew him to the window, pointing as he did so to the vehicles of the rich that were lined along the curb.

Isador, short of stature, and swarthy as to coloring, blinked his bright near-sighted eyes over the obstructing bridge of his Semitic nose, and endeavored to feel as enraged as his companion would have him, but his natural contentment of disposition refused to be disturbed by the good fortune of his neighbor. Perhaps some ancient belief in fatalism handed down to him from his forefathers influenced his views, or

* Written for Short Stories.

the teachings of the Pentateuch forbade covetousness. Be this as it may, he labored hard and tirelessly at whatever came to hand without sufficient malice or envy against his fellow-man to promote a healthy growth of ambition.

Not so Demetrius, who early in infancy seemed to have imbibed with the natural sustenance drawn from the breasts of his American mother the wideawake and enterprising spirit of that nation allied to the honest but envious disposition of his Polish father.

"Of what use is it to stay here?" Demetrius, as usual, spoke dramatically, with many gesticulations of hands and shrugging of shoulders worthy of a pantomimist. "We can no catch a customer with *him*."

Isador shook his head, affecting a dismal exhibition of sympathy as he peered owl-like into the fast-gathering twilight of the winter evening. The steam from the kettle on the little stove in the back room clouded the window with a thick white mist, which Demetrius rubbed impatiently away that he might better feast his miserable eyes on Valeto's prosperity.

An onlooker—chanced he to be in a receptive mood—would have experienced a sentiment of profound pathos in regarding these two under-sized, stoop-shouldered figures looking out into the night, surrounded as they were with evidences of honorable, but insufficient labor and extreme poverty.

The lamplighter appeared suddenly at the opposite corner and touched with his torch the gaudy lamps in front of the saloon beneath Valeto's establishment, then he crossed the street at a jog-trot and performed the same duty to the solitary gas jet that cast its rays athwart the little corner grocery and the glass case holding the diminutive dress form, tricked out in cloth and braid, that served as the modest advertisement of Mickiewicz and Cohen's trade.

"Will you take in the form, to-night, Demetri? It's going to snow already, and the case leaks." Isador's real desire was to divert his companion's thoughts from the opposite shop, but Demetri's almost childlike curiosity knew no pride as he stared wild-eyed and wretched at yet another carriage that drove slowly up the street, then swerved slightly as the driver tightened the reins, causing the horses to back out of the way of an advancing car. The car passed swiftly onward

and the carriage deliberately turned and rolled over the tracks in the direction of Demetrius's shop.

"It's stopping at the grocery store," exclaimed Isador,

twisting his head sidewise like an intelligent raven to get a better view. Then of a sudden he ran his fingers through his mop of black hair. "Look, Demetri!" he almost shouted,

"Ah! what do you think of that, Demetri!" He rushed excitedly into the back room and proceeded to drag on his coat, succeeding in doing so as the outer door opened, admitting the imposing personage of a groom in long coat of tan, muffled to his crimson ears in bear-skin cape and collar. Advancing into the room he laid a long parcel, done up in unbleached muslin, on the table holding sample books and fashion plates.

"Madam wants the cloak by to-morrow evening," he said. "You'll find a note inside."

Demetrius, startled into unnatural silence by the apparition of affluence, suddenly found his voice and essayed to speak, but too late, for already the light coat-tails were disappearing with an arrogant flirt through the door, and the sound of wheels grating against the curbstone told of the departure of the carriage.

A guttural note of supreme satisfaction issued from the throat of Isador as he looked with kindly eyes upon Demetrius. "There," he exclaimed, pointing a stubby finger at the parcel on the table. "How now, Demetrius? You got er customer, too. I'll go take in the form." He clumped out of the room noisily, returning after the absence of a few minutes with the form held carefully in his arms, only to find Demetrius in the depths of woe, gazing first at a sumptuous cloak of blue velvet, ermine lined and lace trimmed, and then at a note which he held with the air of having discovered a scorpion therein.

"A. Valeto,

369 —— —— ——

Kindly remove fur lining from opera cloak and reline with the brocaded satin. The fur comes off on a velvet dress I'm wearing to-morrow night. The cloak must positively be ready when I send for it to-morrow afternoon.

G. VARDEMONDE."

Isador, looking over Demetri's shoulder, read the note laboriously syllable by syllable, and then he set down the form with a sigh and regarded his partner with pitying eyes, and, although but a meagre apology externally for a man, his aspect assumed a form of dignity and sympathy of feeling that could be profoundly felt, but inadequately described,

"What now will you do?" he questioned the unhappy Demetrius.

"Take it over to him." Demetri was carefully, almost reverently, smoothing out the lengths of shimmering satin and inclosing it, as he had found it, between the folds of the cloak, his thick fingers moving with deft neatness and precision over the flowered surface. When all was arranged, he encased the luxurious garment in its wrappings of muslin.

Isador looked on in silence, but all the while an idea had been evolving itself in his sluggish brain.

"How should she know,' he said, 'if it is you who line the cloak or Valeto? She sends to-morrow for it. It is finished. You are paid, eh?" he became quite excited with what appeared to him a clever and by no means dishonorable scheme.

Demetrius paused from tying the tapes of the muslin bundle, and regarded the speaker for a moment in dumb amazement, then startled him by shouting "Stop! I will not listen!" His eyes, usually mild and of a pleasant expression, blazed with a sudden and seemingly unprovoked fury. "You would have me to keep *that* man's work from him? Ha, Isador, your head is of wool. This is not my customer—" he struck the parcel smartly with the back of his hand—"very well, then, the work it also is not mine."

Isador looked at him with an air of confusion. Demetri was right, his head was of wool at times, but his heart, that was of better stuff.

"Demetri," he said half-timidly in Yiddish, "you have a right to what is left at your door. Valeto is the Intolerant, the Purse-proud, the Oppressor. Why then must you give to him *all*?"

Demetri, however, was not to be argued with. He raised his hands unto high heaven, shaking them and his head tragically as he hurried into the adjoining room from which he presently issued in hat and coat. Isador watched him threading his way between carts and drays, and then lost sight of him as he disappeared within the vestibule of Valeto's house.

The evening was spent in dismal silence by the firm of Mickiewicz & Cohen, and the following day was still tinctured with the gloom of the previous night. The three skirts left by the grocer's wife were neatly sponged and rebound, and

the velvet collar on the drug clerk's overcoat was renewed. Then Isador with some difficulty totted up accounts.

| | |
|---|---|
| For rebinding and cleaning three skirts | $2.25 |
| Facing collar of coat | .50 |
| Total | $2.75 |

Isador laid down his pencil and scratched his head thoughtfully. Without fire, food or light the money earned was not of a sufficiently flexible quality to cover the rent.

Demetrius, in the next room, coughed hoarsely as he pressed one of the three skirts, bringing his iron down with a vigorous thump on the wet cloth, and filling the room with an overpowering odor of damp woolen and dye stuffs. Isador narrowed his eyes and listened attentively. "Was that the iron or a knock at the door?" Again the flatiron was brought down heavily, simultaneously with the opening of the door.

A figure tall, and to Isador, radiantly beautiful, glided over the door-sill and into the gloom of the little room with a grace of movement that the profusion of rich materials in which it was draped could not deprive of its lissomness. The astonishment on the face of the man evidently amused the newcomer, for her large lustrous eyes, just hinting a touch of kohl beneath, smiled in unison with her delicately tinted lips.

"Well, were you going to keep me waiting outside all day?" the vision spoke impatiently. "I want to know if you can do some work for me at once, with the guarantee that it will be well done in every respect." She turned to Demetrius, who, impelled by curiosity, had entered the room, iron in hand.

Down went the iron with a thud on the hearthstone, while Demetrius, with the supple grace of a Mohammedan bowed low to the ground, his entire air one of obsequious attention and respectful admiration, that tickled the lady's fancy more than the three encores she had received the night before.

"I am at Madam's service."

"Very well. Last night, I understand, my coachman and groom, who are perfect greenhorns, brought my cloak here to be fixed instead of to Valeto's, I forgot to tell them

which side of the street the tailor was on, and you very decently took the garment across to Valeto at once."

"'Twas nothing to do, Madam. I found the note inside." Demetrius's hands went out, palms upward, and his eyebrows were raised with an expression of utter indifference to his own virtue.

"Well, I happen to think differently. Valeto's a stuck-up little Italian"—Ah, the balm that anointed Demetrius's wounded feelings—"and I'll teach him a little lesson. He tells me he'll finish the cloak, but can't do any more work for me for a week or two. The very idea! After all the people I've sent him. Well, we'll let that pass. What I want now is a stage coat. Long, you understand?" The speaker swept her hands with a graceful movement from her throat downward. "Tight back, big cuffs, cape, etc.—"

"Yes, yes!" Demetrius's eyes began to show animation.

"What for will you wear that coat?"

"Oh, as a highwayman, female robber, brigand. Understand? It's a vaudeville sketch."

Now Demetrius had heard of vaudeville but vaguely, nevertheless he bobbed his head and made obeisance before his gorgeous customer, assuring her over and over that he could do the work, and do it promptly and well.

So straightway the yardstick and tapemeasure were brought forth by the slave-like Isador. From the nape of the lady's neck to her feet was a long distance, and Demetrius of necessity was compelled to stand on tip-toe.

"Ah!" he gesticulated to Isador, behind the back of Madam, "at last I have one who will make my work show for what it is worth." He was all excitement, and had he been an artist with a long-sought-for model at last to work from he could not have exhibited more genuine appreciation.

"Finished?" the customer asked, looking down upon the two stocky figures kneeling at her feet, where they argued the depth of the garment hem.

"Yes, Madam. And the materials?" The figures rose automatically from their kneeling postures and gazed up at her like adoring pigmies.

"Oh, I'll send them right away." The voice of the fair one was as airily light as the huge tulle ruff which she settled about her throat as she swept from the room, leaving in her wake a crisp rustling of silk and delightful scent of violets.

During the preparations of their mid-day meal Demetrius and Isador talked long and eloquently of their new customer. It was a red-letter day with them, and one not to be lightly regarded.

"Demetri, what price did you say?" interrogated Isador,

who was deep in the mysteries of a remarkable, but savory stew, in which garlic and little fish were mixed regardless of measure.

Demetrius looked embarrassed. "I have not yet asked a price, Isador."

"Ha! my, my! that is bad!" Isador blinked rapidly once or twice, and a look of annoyance overspread his features as he removed the irons from the fire and replaced them with the stew-pan.

"What price then shall we say?" Demetrius felt a growing respect for Isador's unlooked-for sense in the matter of business.

Isador mentally did a sum in addition, and gave the answer, "Eighteen dollar."

Demetrius made ready to reply when the sounds of footsteps in the next room called him away. Presently he returned to Isador and whispered, "Quick, Isador, the coal and wood money."

Isador looked as much horrified as if he had asked for a feast candle."

"Yes, be quick, the man waits. And the food money. All I must have."

Isador became obdurate and wagged his head furiously. Demetrius ran his fingers through his hair, making wild grimaces with eyes and mouth until Isador was either frightened or hypnotized into submission, for with some difficulty he extricated a small and much-battered tin box from the depths of the chest which served as a clothes-press and drew therefrom several dilapidated bills, which he reluctantly handed over to Demetrius. Some minutes passed, then Demetrius returned in triumph with his arms filled with packages, both large and small, which he opened with evident pleasure, disclosing to view glossy black broadcloth, satin of vivid scarlet, gold cord, etc.

"What then, Demetri?" spoke Isador, "Have you paid out *all* the money for that?" he pointed a deprecating finger at the pile of goods.

"Sure," Demetrius at once lost his temper. "Isador, to gain you must first invest. She sent the goods to be paid for here. The coat it must be done by Monday. How then! must I send back the goods and put back the work?"

Had Demetrius spoken in the words of Pascal, he would undoubtedly have said to the unreasoning Isador, "Humiliate yourself, impotent Reason; be silent, imbecile Nature," but he merely drew the conversation to a close by measuring

off the cloth and going diligently to work with chalk and shears, while Isador, impressed, but not assured, returned to his cooking.

The two men worked hard that day and the following, and on the third the first fitting took place, when Demetrius assisted his radiant customer to don the garment he had fashioned for her, his eyes fairly sparkling with gratified pride as he watched her step back and survey herself in the cheap mirror, fastened in its wooden frame against the wall. Geraldine was at all times difficult to please, even in the matter of audiences, but, to her credit be it said, when pleased she showed it very genuinely, and the cloak could not have been improved upon. Her artistic eye took in at first glance the excellent curves and graceful lines the material had been molded to, and she noted also the finish of a master hand without the faintest trace of the apprentice. Satisfied, she slipped quickly out of the garment and into the one she had worn.

"That's all right," she said. "It's really fine. I am more than pleased. When's the next fitting?"

"To-morrow, Madam, when the coat will be finished. And the money, madam, for the materials you sent here?"

Geraldine looked affronted. "Why, send the bill for all together. Ugh! how cold your rooms are. You should have more fire. I shall be glad to get into the sunlight again." And she was gone, humming a light air as she descended the steps.

Isador looked solicitously at Demetrius, for the latter winced painfully every now and then as he drew a long breath, but continued stitching away at the scarlet lining of the cloak.

"Demetri, let me ask the grocer for some coals?"

"No, no!" Demetri wagged his head stubbornly.

"But you will get worse already. The rooms are cold like ice."

"Light the lamp."

"The oil will last only until ten o'clock."

"Damn! Isador, do not bother me." Demetrius's flushed face and rumpled hair were outlined against the window, his eyes straining to catch the last bit of light, while the wind howled dismally outside, whirling a storm of snowflakes against the pane.

The partners did not stop for bite nor sup that night, for there was still a considerable amount of elaborate gold braiding to be done on the coat, and as even with the lamp lit the rooms grew bitterly cold, they sat like old women huddled in blankets and sewing with cramped fingers. Towards ten o'clock Demetrius rose from his chair. His face looked drawn and gray, and his eyes had a curious strained glitter in them.

"Get to bed, Demetri. I'll finish the collar." Isador persuaded and urged until Demetrius finally consented, but after he was in bed and well covered up he shivered miserably, as chill after chill chased up and down his aching back and cramped limbs. After hours of wretchedness, he experienced a sensation of faint breathlessness. He put out his hand and tried to catch at something substantial, but what he caught at appeared to slip from his weak grasp, and deeps upon deeps of sleep seemed passing over him, drowning at last every other sensation.

Early the next morning a landeau, buff-lined and elegant, stood before Demetrius's door, while a groom, gorgeous in buckskin breeches and cockaded hat paced the pavement majestically, guarding the bull-terrier snuggling in the lap-robe that cast its sable length over the carriage seat.

Geraldine was a lover of the morning air, therefore she had determined to drive down town while the day was yet young, do several errands and stop at Demetrius's for the cloak. With this intention in view, she stepped lightly from her carriage and quickly mounted the flight of steps leading to the little shop above.

She had been gone but a brief while, when to the groom's amazement she appeared at one of the windows, with sleeves rolled up to the elbows, and rapping smartly on the glass as a signal for him to come to her.

Not unused to the vagaries of his mistress, the man enjoined the coachman to look after the dog, and then mounted the stairs to the rooms of the tailor. On entering them he stood for a moment transfixed with astonishment. Isador, directed by Geraldine, was with difficulty persuading Demetrius to suffer himself to have a mustard plaster placed on his chest.

"You *will* have that plaster on, and at once." Geraldine spoke emphatically, Demetrius moaning a weak protest. "And, Harvey," she turned and addressed the waiting groom,

"you go to the druggist's over the way and telephone for Dr. Van Norman. Tell him I'm here and to come as quickly as he can and bring along a nurse. Not one of his high-falutin ones, but a good honest 'plain Jane.' After you've telephoned him, get this list of things at the drug store and at the little grocery under here." She gave him a slip of paper with some money in it and hurried him out of the door.

No need of kohl or "*Imperial Russe*" now. Geraldine was doing what she loved beyond all else, "managing," and the perfect oval of her cheek was flushed a natural scarlet, while her eyes sparkled brilliantly as she moved about the small apartments putting things to rights, and making the wretched sick man comfortable as can only the hands of a woman. Isador had been dispatched for coal and wood, and by the time the doctor arrived the tiny rooms presented a more cheerful aspect of warmth and neatness, and Demetrius had been pursuaded into swallowing a cup of un-koshered beef tea.

"Well?" Dr. Van Norman, big and rosy, rubbed his hands above the stove and shot a glance of inquiry, largely charged with amusement, at Geraldine, who stood, with skirt pinned up and hair becomingly dishevelled, beating an egg into milk with a vigor of action that brought into play dim-

ples at the wrists and elbows of her splendid arms. "May I ask 'Madam Sans Gêne' what is this new rôle I find you in?"

Geraldine scorned him with a look. "After you've seen your patient I'll tell you." And, being rather good in emotional parts, she beat two Christian tears right into the midst of the creamy foam, which, had Demetrius known, would have damned forever the nutritious drink.

"Now, then, out with it," said the doctor, returning to her side after the lapse of a few moments taken up with his examination of Demetrius. "The man's got an attack of pleurisy. I can pull him through all right though, so you need not bother about *him*."

"Do you see that cloak?" Geraldine pointed a dripping spoon at a red and black garment hanging on some pegs on the wall. The doctor's eyes followed the direction of the spoon, then he nodded his head, after giving a cursory glance at the cloak designated.

"Well," continued Geraldine, "these two poor little men worked night and day on that thing for me, and spent their last cent for it, going without food or fire so I could have it in time. I never thought, you know, to pay for the materials, just sent them here C. O. D.," she added apologetically.

"And what of that?" the doctor spoke carelessly, experiencing a feeling of jealous discomfort as he listened to Geraldine's words of praise for the little tailors.

"Would you do it? Would that miserable Valeto have done it? Would any man on this earth have gone without food and fire that I might flaunt a new coat or garment on the stage?" Geraldine's gestures became dramatic, and had the doctor not rescued the bowl from her it is doubtful whether Demetrius would ever have received the contents.

"Well, have you paid them now?" Dr. Van Norman's right eyebrow executed a remarkable upward wiggle of inquiry.

"Certainly, I have."

"Too much she paid, too much." Isador looked gloatingly at a little pile of bills on the mantel shelf.

Geraldine ignored the remark, but noted the look, and wished she had doubled the amount as she began pulling her sleeves down preparatory to taking her leave.

"Now," she said, turning to Isador, "is there anything else you think he would like that I can get him?"

"Oh, Madam, if Demetrius could but see this," Isador pointed from the window at which he stood. He waved his hand excitedly in the direction of the street, and Geraldine and the doctor looked over his shoulder to the sidewalk below.

"Well, what's to pay, I see nothing?"

"Ah, look, Madam! The carriage, the dog, the coachman! If Demetrius could but see it *all*, and *that* man also." He pointed to the red brick building opposite, and even as he did so Valèto the Intolerant appeared at his window and stood with hands thrust deep in his pockets, surveying the carriage of his whilom customer.

# HE Danger Signal:

## The Story of an Unfortunate Experiment, by Oskar Reich. Translated from the German, by J. V. Minor*

"PORTER, put my satchel in the through carriage for Salzburg, not the smoker."

"All right, sir."

A few moments later Edgar Spilten was installed in the desired carriage. He always traveled in the compartment for non-smokers, for he not only disliked the habit, but also was ever on the lookout for adventures on his travels, and as ladies generally gave special preference to this compartment, he found it more opportune. And if a young girl, or a mother with a pretty daughter should enter, and he was fortunate enough to get into conversation with them, he would say to himself complacently "*diem non perdidi*," and revel in the fond hope that it might have been a great heiress whom he would meet again, and eventually, of course, lead to the altar.

To-day his prospects looked meager. The guard had already closed the doors, and he was still alone. The train, on the whole, was rather empty. As it was winter there was but little traveling for pleasure, and the number of those driven forth by business or duty was small at this time of the year. In one of the two adjoining compartments a trio of men had already picked acquaintance, and were absorbed in a game of "*taroc*," while in the other a pair of travelers seemed to consider it their chief aim to establish a cigarette record. So there was no companionship for him on either side, as he neither smoked nor cared anything for cards,

* Translated for Short Stories.

The carriage door was thrown open and a porter appeared laden with innumerable bags and bundles, which he hurriedly tossed up into the rack.

"Just like a novel," murmured Edgar. "I say, porter, who is coming in here?"

"A lady."

"Young?"

"Surely, Herr Spilten. You may see for yourself."

"What, Frau Hofrathin! You? This is what I call a surprise. You have no idea how delighted I am."

"And I, but for another reason, namely, that I succeeded in getting here at all. That I am in this last carriage is simply because I had just time enough to reach it. It was a mad rush. Thank heaven my husband was not there; he is always so nervous."

"Like all husbands. May I be so rude as to ask where you are bound?"

"To my sister in Munich; you know Ella married there. My husband left yesterday for a fortnight's trip to the Budapesth convention, and I am taking advantage of his absence to pay this long-deferred visit. And you?"

"I am on my way to Salzburg."

"Ah, yes. Tell me, why were you not at the Waller's last Sunday? You have always been such a *habitué* there."

"I found it absolutely impossible, it was such an exceptionally full day. Four "At homes." Did I miss anything?

"I cannot judge of that. You must decide for yourself when I tell you who was there. First, Martha Schwert——"

"That is intended partly as a feeler, I presume."

"No, wholly."

"Oh, I don't deny that I am attentive to Martha Schwert. Why should I not be? She is certainly very pretty, or perhaps you do not agree with me."

"Indeed, yes; one of the prettiest girls in Vienna. Is she equally remarkable for her discretion?"

"The same old question whenever her name is mentioned. No, she is not remarkably discreet. Quite the contrary, in fact."

"And yet——"

"And yet I am one of her devotees. At balls and skating parties she is always the most beautiful girl present, and

to dance a polonaise or a quadrille with her gives me thorough satisfaction. As for my acquaintances, it irritates the men exceedingly, and the women even more. And then the cutting observations, especially from the ladies: 'Ah, you know Fraulein Schwert? Pretty features, but rather expressionless.' 'A picture without a soul.' 'Do you find Fraulein Schwert so *very* entertaining?' etc. Besides, my dear lady, I have recently met Ida Zwirner at Wiegand, and I worship at her shrine also."

"You are positively Don Juan of the drawing-room. You have a long list of gods and goddesses, a veritable Olympus, before whose altars you bend."

At St. Polten, this being the weekly market day there, a number of people got on, but mostly second class. Moreover, Edgar had tipped the guard a gulden to insure no one entering his compartment.

By the time the train had reached Anstetten it had picked up five young girls, three small groups of people, and four unhappy looking couples.

"We reach Linz in twenty minutes, do we not? They wait there fifteen minutes for lunch."

"Too little time to eat, and too long to go hungry. However, as we are a little late, the train will probably not make so long a stop."

"We might at all events have the heat turned off."

"Pardon me, my dear lady, but the lever you were about to grasp is the danger signal."

"Ah, I might have brought about a strange result."

"Not so dreadful, after all. As you see, it would simply be a penalty of fifty gulden."

"I hardly know why, but I always think that I would like to give the signal once, just to see what would happen.

"That idea, I fancy, occurs to most of us; to me, at any rate, whenever I travel by train. It is the same when I cross a bridge, I always wonder what would happen if I were to jump over; or if I were to say something unheard of, something wildly sensational, when I am out in society."

"I have the same feeling, precisely."

"Then—if you like, Frau Hofrathin—'Two souls with but a single thought'—let us put it to the test."

"But think of the consequences. You would be arrested and imprisoned, and then—imagine the panic of our fellow-

passengers. By the way, could they tell who had given the signal?"

"I rather think the machinery registers that. But, really, this would be the best possible opportunity, and I am curious to the limit. There is a long stop at Linz, time enough for the station master to prefer a charge against me and for me to pay the penalty, for that is all there is to it. I will simply tell him that I intended to turn off the heat, and made a mistake. So—" and before the young woman could prevent him he had pulled the lever.

A shrill whistle and a jerk, the wheels creaking and groaning beneath the grinding pressure of the breaks—another jerk, and the train stopped. Passengers rushed to the windows, guards ran from carriage to carriage. Then suddenly followed a blinding crash.

The local had, as usual, been delayed, and behind it came rushing on the Orient express, which was due in Linz a few minutes after the local, and preceded it from there on. The guards, startled by the danger signal, thought only of discovering where help was needed, and in the excitement and confusion no one had remembered the danger that threatened and no precautions had been taken to flag the train.

Owing to the heavy, impenetrable fog, and also to the fact that the local had come to a stop just around a curve, the engineer of the Orient express had first seen it when only a few yards distant, and though he blew his whistle and applied the brakes, the express dashed into the train ahead at almost full speed. Fifteen dead, more than forty severely injured! Only the two guards of the local, who had jumped out and were running beside the train, were saved, and Edgar Spilten, too, was absolutely unharmed. Wishing to see the effect of his act he had opened the carriage door, and was standing on the top step. The collision simply threw him out upon the railway embankment, whence he rolled down into the ditch below without receiving the slightest injury.

For a moment he lay there motionless. Could it be possible! Then he pulled himself together and crawled on his hands and knees up the declivity, only to break down entirely at the scene before him. The engine of the Orient express was in the carriage which he and his traveling companions had occupied. It had plunged through the center of the car, cut it in two and completely wrecked it. Besides this,

the boiler of the locomotive had exploded, and the wreck was now ablaze. It was impossible that any occupant of this carriage could still be alive. But the forward carriages were telescoped also, and while an awful silence brooded over the rear of the train, from ahead came agonized calls for help, smothered cries and groans. Edgar staggered up, he knew not how, and rushed to the last carriage to help, if it were yet possible, but here there were none to save. All who had been seated there, the *taroc* players, the two smokers and the Hofrathin must have met an instantaneous death. This knowledge comforted him a little as he saw the flames now bursting from every part of the carriage.

He hurried forward, ran up to the first guard that he met, and began to stammer out his self-accusation. No one would listen to him or let him speak. Seeing him unharmed some believed him to be bemoaning the loss of a loved one, and had words of pity for him; others ordered him, since he was uninjured, to assist in the work of rescue. Here and there a voice called to him for help.

He tried to save where he could, but his strength forsook him. Half crazed with emotion and anxiety he sank to the ground and seated himself upon a mile-stone at the edge of the railroad embankment. No one paid any attention to him, and he began to think. There was but one course for him to pursue now, to give himself up to the authorities and declare his guilt. The thought that he would suffer punishment for his inexcusable folly aroused in him at first a grim satisfaction. A prisoner for a year or two, condemned to solitude and the gnawings of conscience and remorse—then suddenly another thought flashed across his brain: his old parents, whose only son, whose pride he was, what would they do? What unspeakable pain it would cause them! Their son a convict; the good old stainless name on every tongue, cursed and reviled by thousands. And then, the prison—what torture for them! When he should emerge from it, who would associate with him?

Meanwhile several passengers of the Orient express, together with a guide, had gone on foot to the station at Linz to obtain assistance. In the hour that elapsed before their return Edgar had time to reflect.

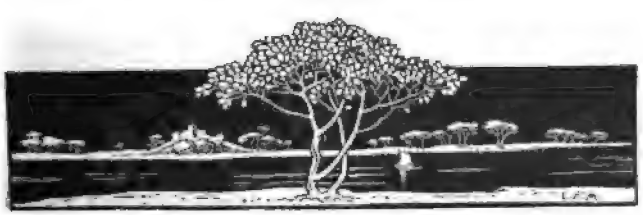
If, after all, he should not denounce himself! Who then could do it? Even if it were ascertained in which carriage

the danger signal had been set in motion, who could know which of the passengers had done the act, when all except himself were now silenced forever. And was it at all probable that in this chaos of ruins which the flames were even now consuming there could be found any indication whence the signal had come? Then he considered whether any other person was in danger of bearing the responsibility for the accident. No other living being knew the truth. There had been scarcely time for the two guards to reach the end of the train. They had certainly not come far enough to cover the track with torpedoes, but if they had mistaken their duty it was no affair of his. The engineer of the Orient express was dead, so there, too, he had nothing to fear.

And finally, was he then wholly responsible? Strictly speaking, no. Why should the first train have been so late that the second was directly behind it? The slightest defect in the engine, the least obstruction on the track would have brought the train to a standstill, and the catastrophe would have occurred in the self-same manner. When he looked at the matter in the true light he was perhaps the tool of a disastrous providence, possibly a link in the chain, but nothing more. He arose, determined to be silent.

The examination disclosed nothing definite. So much was certain, that the danger signal had been given. By whom and why remained a mystery. Some thought that perhaps a passenger had seen the Orient express coming, and had thought thus to avoid a possible collision.

Edgar's friends wonder that he, once the gayest of the gay, is now so often sad and melancholy. "You know," they say, "he was in that terrible railroad accident near Linz, and was the only one in the rear carriage to escape with his life. That is why he is always so unwilling now to travel by train."



# SALVING the "Senator:"

## A Story of the Sea.

THE ice-coated tramp slouched under her wheezing machinery through the gray seas and the dirty drizzle at an indifferent speed, and at three-minute intervals her siren howled dismally into the mists to give warning of her approach. Her second mate, sumptuously clad in oilskins and leather sea boots—the trade-mark of the North Atlantic mariner—dodged the sprays that licked the bridge and stared fiercely into the weather. Surely, he thought, this kind of atmosphere was enough to put any Christian out of temper. This, however, was not the first cause of his ill-feeling; and, finding nothing more sociable on the bridge than the ice-streamed ledge of the canvas dodger, to it he addressed his misery:

'A second mate contemplating marriage on seven pounds per month! Well, that's all right so far as it goes; but a second mate designing matrimony on the same seven, who has proposed already to his girl, and then finds all the chances of sack from his job, is all very wrong so far as it goes—and it goes the dickens of a way.'

Walters sniffed the cold air sententiously, and tried to forget the hardness Fate held in store for him by zealously fixing his attention and eyes on the fog, and, by way of easing his feelings, viciously pulling the whistle-string, which sent discords of hideous music madly shrieking over the dark swells; but that first cause would return and be reasoned with. 'So you've got to do it—you've got to give her up,' it said; and at these especial moments the wish of the second mate was that a gray-bearded roller would wash him overboard into the Western ocean and eternity. Then his uttermost thought was to treat himself to a good, sensible, all-round

* From Chambers's Journal.

kicking; for a seaman, he believed, had no claim to sentiment. 'I wonder if that yarn's true the old man told me; if so, pack up your chest and trot, Mister Walters, when you're paid off at Newcastle.'

Thus, in uncomfortable thought-company his hours of the watch slid by, and then the foreteller of Walters's bad luck cautiously scaled the bridge-ladder and groped along the slippery bridge to the compass.

Captain Larry glared savagely into the eye of the exasperating weather, and, crunching a block of ice underfoot, volleyed to Walters: 'Hang the eternal bad chances that dog us like hungry wolves! Hang the bad weather! Hang all! Put the engines "full-ahead" and God bless the Board o' Trade Regulations. We've been steaming slow for three whole days, and the owner'll be everlastingly chewing the rag about his condemned tramp of tramps and her most unfortunate skipper of skippers. It's enough to make a man bald! I'm grayed already, and the sooner I go under ground the sooner I'll pass from this vale of misery to a brighter beyond.'

Walters appreciated the sentiments of the master-mariner, and grinned; while, with a willing hand, he telegraphed the order received to the engineer on watch in the engine-room, and some time later the old tramp vibrated heavily to the new strain, and accomplished her racing speed of a few yards under seven and a half knots.

Larry watched the leaden seas hurl past with a face broadening to contentment. 'Lord! how she can go when she likes!' he commented. 'The engineer despises his bonus this voyage.'

Then the soaking nor'-west drizzle spat spitefully upon Captain Larry, which caused him to crouch under cover of the weather-dodger. Walters, in answer to Larry's bidding, spread sheets of torturing music about the seas with a generous hand. This generosity was necessary—very necessary.

That he was running tremendous risks, no one knew better than the captain of the Masterpiece, for a steamboat's engines working 'full ahead' are as a rule very refractory to go astern at a moment's notice. The speed of 'full ahead' is a detail out of consideration. The ship was in the 'great circle' track adopted by the Western ocean liners that plough it on a line correct as railway running. Moreover Larry was acting

in due contravention of the international law that says: 'In fog . . . all ships shall go at a moderate speed;' which means something below their average 'full.' Still, a tramp skipper cannot serve two masters, and Larry explained this to Walters, while both mariners said bitter things about sea-going, and wiped the brine with mittened hands from their faces.

'We've two enemies to fight,' began the skipper. 'If we get into collision by steaming fast, I lose my ticket from the Board o' Trade. If I avert collision by steaming slow (granted the owner is able to meet creditors and keep his ship), I thus come late to port and get bundled out neck and crop, without thanks. So where's the odds? I lose my job in any event. But this is a special case. The owner's in bad straits, beating through em with Dutchmen's anchors.' Dutchmen's anchors, by the way, are those left at home.

Larry came confidentially close to Walters; and the second mate prepared himself to listen heroically to a story he now knew by heart.

'They're in debt for two thousand pounds, and can't raise it. They're young in shipping circles, and not well enough known at Lloyd's to obtain a loan; but they've got to raise the breeze somehow; and, so far as I can see, that somehow consists in selling up the ship. As a result, I go, you go, we all go. And I'm sorry for you and the girl. I'd advise you to write her from New York, and offer arbitration—patience. And if she's a good un—and there's 'eaps of 'em on the Tyne: I know a particularly nice one—she'll accept and wait. Otherwise, Mister Walters, overboard you go, and good riddance. If the girl clings to a straw'—Walters grinned—'and the worst happens—which is likely—why, you may perhaps pick up a job as a Methodist parson or a farmer, or go organ-grinding until you get your hand in, and then you know—oh! it's only a dream—start on your own with organs and monkeys and ice-cream carts; so with the girl's help (she'd mix the ice cream) you might set up a kind of indiscriminate confectionery business, and have a plate over the shop with your name in gilt letters as large as those on the bows of the Masterpiece.'

Now Walters, unlike most men who hire the sea for a living had no ambition outside his work. Besides, his ideas concerning shore-labor were just as sublimely foggy as thos expressed by the master-mariner. Apart from that, durin

most of the time the steamship Masterpiece had kicked up her heels sky-high in the North Atlantic, Walters had served her in the capacity of second mate. For three voyages he had shipped as mate; still permanent promotion seemed a long way distant; but he never wavered in faith to her or her owner, though, to use his own expression of endearment. she was a 'hog' of a steamboat. He was proud of her, mightily proud of himself, and prouder still to think of the day he should be her master on fifteen pounds per month and all he could fudge; but that woeful tale of debt dissipated all his happy thoughts of a rather gilded future, and dear-heart Nellie seemed to fade out of his life. He looked sourly upwards at the streaming blanket that cut short daylight, and listened to the spiteful siren blasts, and the echoes that came as the answering screech of an ocean sister playing in the game of Atlantic 'blind man's buff.'

Captain Larry further expounded the case of the financially struggling tramp. 'I know,' he said, 'the owner has some relation or other who has plenty of cash; but they're at loggerheads, and therefore wouldn't help each other if either were on the edge of the precipice of ruin. You know what relations are, Mister Walters, in these matters. I see nothing for it but a clean wipe-out for all hands, unless a very strange stranger steps in and saves the old wagon, and thus gives the vermin who eke a subsistence out of her beef and biscuits to rivet their bodies and souls."

That speedy conclusion of Captain Larry to disregard deep-sea rules was as quickly overridden. A big Cunarder was the cause; and a great scare, many maledictions, and the adoption of extreme caution aboard the Masterpiece the effect. The liner fled past the tramp's beam scarce a ship's-length distant, and her myriad electric lights flashed through the mist like those of a brilliantly lit town; she gave a tearing shriek on her quadruple siren, and then there came darkness all about, and the tramp was once more left to her own miserable cogitations. Larry reduced speed, and for seven days the steamer dragged wearily forward, and needled a course past the 'Banks.'

It was well for the ship and her crew that Larry took this action, for vessels sailed out of the gloom from all directions, sometimes barely leaving time for the Masterpiece to get out of collision-reach.

To Larry, through all those miserable seven days there loomed in the murky mists the apparition of a crying, angry owner, till at last the distracted skipper spoke with the engineer. Then that gentleman, having an affectionate spouse in New York, and understanding his business, manfully drove the big tramp at her best; going, indeed, like half the steamers she shaved past, especially the mail-boats, who should have known better even if they had excusably less conscience. 'Unless this dirty fog stretches from Heaven to Hades we'll run out of it,' was Larry's comment to the engineer.

So the 'white elephant' bumped over the swells under one hundred and fifty pounds pressure of steam and a lying telegraph. True enough they ran out of the fog; and when the skipper boarded the bridge at three o'clock the next morning he found overhead a cheerful wintry sky, powdered with dots of twinkling yellow, the air clear and sharp as crystal, and the wind whistling somewhat freshly out of the west-nor'-west. Larry dropped into the chart room, noted the barometer, and came afterwards to Walters, making no comment for a time, and staring gloomily into the west-nor'-west, out of which rolled an ugly swell.

He broke out at last. 'Three weeks of torment,' he said, fiercely; 'freight dwindling to the Lord knows where; a picture of my owner with his boots ready to do business with me at the end of the voyage, and yet the Atlantic isn't satisfied. Why doesn't it drown us outright? We no sooner clear the fog than we get the promise of a rousing gale. Are we ever to reach New York?'

'It's not impossible,' replied Walters. 'Old Howie says we've coal for three weeks' steaming.'

Larry did not resent this banter from his subordinate; for the skipper had hurled it at the tramp wholesale since the time of her advent from the yard. It was whispered that even her builders swore mildly under their breath as they watched her day unto day increase into uglier dimensions, and made prophecies and took affidavits for a tremendous coal consumption; and when Larry took her over on the Clyde at her christening he complimented the master-builder severely: 'The man who designed her, sir, is a genius; but the man who can rivet lobster cans into a more horrible shape is a marvel.' And even the builder forgave the captain for speaking the truth. That is a part of her past history. At

present she executed an extremely lively movement by taking a half-turn out of herself, and then ducked her bow and shipped a huge sea over her forecastle that cataracted six feet deep in the well of the foredeck, while the sprays lashed up and white-curtained the bridge and its crew, and snaked about the funnel and brined it so that the great iron structure glistened like a huge sheet of diamonds.

Larry and Walters shook the sea from their oilskins, and when the water seethed off the bridge, settled into the weather-corner for a quiet, contented growl; so that there was some consolation in the bad weather and the worse tramp.

'She's a blessing in disguise,' said Larry, grinning.

'Yes?' questioned Walters. 'But undoubtedly under any other raiment she's anything but a blessing.'

'Come to think of it,' philosophized Larry, 'it does my tar-pot soul good to have a bit of experience like this.'

'You are destined, sir, to be a martyr,' said the second mate.

'On the contrary, I'd like to be a seaman's agitator. I'm seriously thinking of starting a society, and spouting mercantile marine politics on the top of a beef-cask at the back of the Liverpool Sailors' Home.

'Flock to my banner, O Brethren of the Sea!
And list to what a land-shark has to spout to thee!'

'That's prime, sir,' said Walters. 'Did you decompose all that at once.?'

'Mere impromptoo,' laughed the skipper.

At this moment both men stared hard ahead; the next they dived amidships and secured binoculars from a teakwood box. And by-and-by, when the Masterpiece lifted, on the dark water there reflected a cloud of brilliant blue and yellow, shot with the seething white of the sea-crests; and, lastly, over the great seas the light itself hove up and revealed a distressed steamer.

'Salvation!' muttered Walters. 'Funnel white, top black; three sticks well raked. Can't distinguish the hull. But I'll call her a White Star liner—bless her!'

'Oil,' said Larry; 'struck oil, mister, I think; good iron all right!'

Then everything was lost to view; a sea tumbled over the bridge, and remnants became solidified into icicles in the tramp's rigging; but Walters resented the merciless wet not

an atom. The old Masterpiece was for the nonce a confectioner's shop, and her bridge the counter, and somewhere about was dear-heart Nellie.

Meantime the steamer dived painfully on her zig-zag course towards the signalling ship. Now she topped a mountain-surge, and now she raced madly down the great sea-wall into the trough, only to climb the next roller half-way and grope blindly through, while the enraged seas poured over her bulwarks. Once, as she mounted to the encounter, the bridge-crew observed another flare of light.

'They seem to be in a desperate hurry to leave the ship,' said Larry, with falling heart. 'My firm can't afford to blow off squibs as if it were a Guy Fawkes' exhibition; so give a blast on the whistle, mister, as answer to her signal.'

Aggravatingly slow the Masterpiece crawled onwards, at times taking exception, when she gathered heart and speed and split the seas with abandon, and rent them into scud; then rose, her great iron body all aquiver, and the smoke of the broken water flinging in song to her lower mastheads.

Through all this the captain and his second officer played hide-and-seek, and caught occasional glimpses of the lurching redemption ahead. The weather enjoyed the game, and grew fiercer; but the tramp struggled boldly, casting her nose skywards, and then heaving her bows deep, deep down into the Atlantic, while her stern hung high and dry in the air, with the propeller wildly beating to the hysterical machinery that at every upheaval threatened to put an end to the steamer and her torture.

To Walters the staggering situation appealed strongly. He was in for 'neck or nothing,' but was still buoyed with a faint hope of reaching New York with a whole skin in a whole ship. He spoke his thoughts: 'Hadn't we better ease her down, else we may totally break up?'

The tramp's skipper eyed Walters savagely.

'Are we to give up now,' he cried, 'at the auspicious moment, and sling away wilfully the chance of making a few chips? What about the ice-cream bar? If this old box wants us to attend her funeral, let it be so, and be hanged to her!' He pointed to a position where the other steamer lay hid deep in a seaway. 'Perhaps you'll be able to accomplish something great, mister, Don't let the chance by.'

So the tramp had to battle forward, and an angry sea

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sprang up by way of retort, and soaked and bruised against the wheel the man who had set her at defiance.

It was when the high dawn slanted athwart the boiling ocean that the vessel revealed herself in true colors, and Walters banged his glasses into the box with unmistakable disgust.

'A pot-bellied old coal-wagon bound to the west'ard.'

'Yes, she's a funny old sardine-tin,' compromised Larry. But she may be a valuable boat,' he added, hopefully.

"She's too painfully built for that,' subtracted Walters.

Then a hoarse shout floated down to the Masterpiece on the streaming wind: 'Will you take us off? We're sinking.'

'Oh, dear!' groaned the second mate. 'There's nothing to be earned there but a tin medal, and emphatically I didn't come to sea for honor.'

To the hail of the steamer to windward the skipper of the Masterpiece shrieked reply across the mad seas with the siren, forged half a mile farther, and then eased his engines, so that his vessel lost headway. He looked at the second mate, and then overside at the great seas which screwed upwards the jerry-tramp; and when a great roller had swept the rusty side and left a momentary peace in its wake, the captain spoke:

'If you can get a crew to volunteer, go ahead; but it's a risky job, Mister Walters.'

'Beggars are not choosers, and might as well die fighting,' answered Walters, and grinned gloomily. He left the bridge, roused all hands, and arraigned them on the steering bridge, where whiskey was provided by the skipper to give the sailors encouragement. When the captain had assisted himself generously, he proceeded from pleasure to business.

'There's more whiskey where this came from; but that's got to be earned. Astern of us there's a steamboat's crowd yelling for us to take 'em off. As I understand, there's no salvage, because the boat's sinking. But there'll be a smoking concert at the Liverpool home if you fellows do the right thing; and anyone bold enough to get only half-drowned will no doubt be awarded a good, solid, unbreakable medal Don't you think it's worth earning?'

However, the hands appeared unanimous in adverse opinion; they were not quite so ready to volunteer manning a boat as they were to drink free whiskey; and when Walters had

waited impatiently two minutes for answer, he pitched upon the best man of the crowd.

'Griffen,' he said savagely, 'come out of that gum-sucking congregation. You're worth three pounds per month, and one-half your voyage is pay to the slop-chest. If you get drowned now instead of a little later on, you'll die to wind-'ard of your debts; in the other case you'll work for nothing.'

Griffen gave consent to the usurious proposal by striding across the bridge. 'Whiskey,' he observed,'will nerve a chap to do anything,' and he cast fond eyes upon the bottle; while Larry overcame his acquisitive scruples and kindly took the 'int' as Griffen expressed it.

The crowd had been waiting for a leader, so that there was a full complement chosen to man the lifeboat. Then all hands set to work to sling overboard the craft of rescue, while to leeward the vessel in distress bleated on her whistle for help. Soon the lifeboat took the water, and, with a half-coil of new three-inch line in her stem, dropped astern.

The big seas caught her and flung her into a chasm that yawned black and grim, and the boatmen held to the thwarts and wondered how many seconds would elapse before they should say 'Amen!' But marvellously the lifeboat swung up and over the seas, and rode them as a graceful albatross rides Cape Horners. All the time the skipper watched anxiously from the poop and slacked the line from the bits, and sighed relief when the staggering craft bobbed to his ken every other half-minute.

'It's not exactly a yachting expedition,' he defined; and the boat shot down, down, until Larry shook with a terrible fear—and then bravely out of the smoking trough the lifeboat climbed.

When the line came to a finish Walters put out his sea-anchor to lessen the drift and keep her head on, and for the next ten seconds no one knew precisely what happened. A great, green wall of water, white-fringed and ominous, rose over the stem, and as some person shouted 'Hold on!' an ice-biting sea snapped over the boat and its crew. At the limit of those ten seconds, Griffen, bathing neck-deep, came out of the salty smother and grasped the boat's gunwhale; and the crew hauled him aboard and laid him, a shivering heap, upon the bottom boards.

After many editions of this, the lifeboat, with three men bailing her out for dear life, came alongside the steamship Senator, from which a line was thrown and many eager faces peered. Down the ropes the Senator's crew came swiftly, with death above and death below—or at least a promise of it. A big man was the last to descend, and he came as coolly as if he were entering a ball-room. He squeezed himself on the stern thwart and smiled, which irritated Walters.

'I don't know what you see to monkey at,' he spluttered 'Hi! shove her off there, some of you, unless you want us to be swamped.'

'I've been looking for adventure,' explained the big man, 'and I've found it—heaps of it. And I'm not going to look for it any more.'

The second mate regarded the speaker with appreciation.

'Yes,' he said, 'you've about gone the whole hog, Mister Quixote, and I admire your effort to be drowned rather than buried and to save funeral expenses. It's a good idea, that adventure business; and my devout wish for you is that you get an epitaph in the Atlantic. It's a nice poetical place, isn't it? It's you passenger Jonahs that cause mishaps at sea, Mister Quixote, and that's my belief.'

Then Walters addressed himself to a black-whiskered man whom the rescued crew treated with some deference.

'I believe you are the Senator's skipper?'

'I am, my lad.'

'What's the matter with the bucket?'

'She's suffering from a chronic desire to sink.'

'Been in collision?'

'Yes. I think we must have struck something below water; perhaps a sunken wreck. Anyhow, whatever it was, it punched a big hole in her under the engine-room.'

'Much water in her?'

'Half way up the cylinders and bunkers; the engine-room's fairly drowned.'

'But her Plimsoll's well above water.'

'That may be.'

'Any cargo in the holds?'

'Nothing. Ballast for New York.'

'How long do you suppose she'll swim?'

'A few hours.'

Then the lifeboat came to the side of the Masterpiece, which vessel had hung handy to leeward to pick up her crew.

Larry's face was decidedly long as he glanced out of the chart-room at the white hail and wind-squalls driving madly from the flaked hills in the westward.

'It's something more than desperate,' he said. 'We're barely provisioned for ten days longer, and now there's twenty-two more mouths to feed.'

Naturally enough, with a minus quantity of dividends, the owner could ill supply the Masterpiece generously.

'It's hard lines on you,' said the salved passenger, and then dived into the shelter of the weather-dodger, where Walters kept a look-out and made poetry upon this life of torment.

Two miles astern the Senator rolled in the long seas like a huge bucket, and buried her well-decks at intervals. Eight hours had elapsed since her desertion, and still she did not appear to settle deeper in the water.

'It's quite time she sank,' said Walters, 'according to her skipper.'

The second mate lost eyes for reality. Salvage gave him visions of dear-heart Nellie and a master's berth; but salvage looked very uncomfortable, not to say impossible.

All day the Masterpiece crawled west at a quarter-knot-an-hour speed, and the Atlantic piled up agony and wrought wholesale destruction about the steamer's decks; it tore out the chart room, carried away stoke-hole ventilators, and all but put out the fires, lifted the main winch from its deck-bolts, cracked and tore at the bulwark, and swept the whole business pell-mell into the sea. In the engine-room the big Geordie mechanics throttled the racing machinery, and swore at the fate that made them work knee-deep on the foot-plates in brine.

At 5 P.M. Walters took over charge of the bridge from the mate, and glancing across the purple swells to where still hung the ungainly Senator—no deeper, surely, he thought, than at noon—experienced a most pleasant heart-throbbing which sent his half-frozen blood oozing to his face, and for a time he became dreamily thoughtful. Larry unpleasantly awoke the second mate.

'Things are worse than I thought,' he said. 'We've barely provisions for five days for one crew. I've inspected the lazaret, and there's no doubt at all upon the matter. Still, the weather's clearing, and we'll soon make good speed.'

Walters came quickly to Larry and said, 'I've been thinking it over, and I've got an idea.'

'Let's hear it, man.'

'That deserted ship has all we require.'

'Well, what of that?'

'Hang on to her, and when the sea smooths down I'll go aboard and get all you want.'

'Surely you're not so mad. The Senator's sinking. Her skipper says so, and he ought to know.'

'He ought to,' replied Walters, quietly.

Larry turned on the second mate quickly. 'Well?' he said.

'That ship is not sinking, and I've an idea what's saving her.'

'Go on.'

'That's all.'

'Are you sure of all you say?'

'Positive.'

The skipper stamped upon the bridge and strode athwart. At last he gave Walters a decision.

'The chance is yours. Ring the engines down "slow."'

They held tight to the Senator, and the weather slowly fined.

The late skipper showed some uneasiness, and asked, 'Do you mean to tow her, Captain Larry?'

'I've done worse things in my time,' was the response; and the captain of the Masterpiece went to the upper bridge and waited for the moon to clear the darkness. At midnight the yellow globe swung over the eastern swells and sent a pale, golden light shafting over the heaving bosom of the Atlantic, revealing the Senator riding the seas quite comfortably. By the time the moon meridianed the weather had decidedly improved and the sea gone down.

Larry ported his helm and brought the Masterpiece almost alongside the Senator, so that the drippings from her scuppers and plate-edges could be plainly heard aboard the sister-tramp. The Senator's skipper, leaning over the rail, interrogated Larry: 'What do you mean to do with my ship?'

'Board her and get provisions for your crew and yourself.'

'You're utterly foolish. The old box won't live five minutes.'

'Long enough for my second mate to take her in hand.'

'You'd pirate my steamboat?'

'Not for worlds.'

'I'll go aboard, too.'

'With my permission. Oh no, sir; you'll stay where you are.'

A boat was put out; the lifeboat was drifting east in sections; and half-an-hour afterwards Walters returned with his boat loaded with tinned provisions.

'She's a safe salvage,' he exclaimed. 'Not a drop of water in the holds; her bulkheads have saved her. What water she has cannot be increased.'

Finally the ex-captain of the Senator was invited into the chart-room.

'Your ship's waiting to be salved,' said Larry.

'Rot!' replied the Senator's master angrily; 'and a man's a fool who says otherwise than that she's perfectly unsafe.'

'Very well,' replied Walters, 'I'm off aboard. I'll see you in New York.'

'Stop! stop!' cried the skipper. 'You don't mean she's all right?'

'I mean I want your apology, or your ship's mine.'

'I don't want to waste any more time,' observed Larry after an interval of silence. 'Come down your dignity or take the consequences.'

Some time later the Senator, secure on a double hawser, was towing over the gilded deep, her former captain on her bridge grateful, but feeling small.

The pent-up feelings of the second mate found a sympathetic ear into which to pour their load; for surely disappointment had cut him with a cruelly keen edge.

'After all the trouble and worry and risk. By ——, man! I thought I'd get something out of the business besides a tin medal and the sack. We've given that fellow our rightful salvage, and it broke me up to do it on account of the promise I made to my girl. Well—he was a shell-back, same as myself. Perhaps he's already got a wife and youngsters. The salvage on that old drag-astern will be a mere nothing. If I could only get to that rich relation of our owner I'd boot him—no, boot him isn't strong enough—I'd kick him until he was black and blue in the face, and then heave him overboard. Well, never mind any more now; there's the steward banging the hash-hammer.'

'You like the Masterpiece?' inquired the salved passenger.

'She'll do, though she's a hog in a seaway. But she gives

me six pounds a month and promises—substantial promises.'

At New York, where the authorities took over the Senator for repairs, the passenger left the Masterpiece and wished Walters luck.

Some days later the tramp steamed from Sandy Hook, set her course in the home trail, and after battling for seventeen days, berthed at one of the Newcastle quays.

She had but tied up to the wharf-posts when a boy handed a note over the bulwarks. Larry read it with a lengthening face and approached the second mate, who was busy scouring the decks of lines and cork fenders.

'We're wanted at the office,' he said grimly, and stalked to his room without further explanation; and each man, attired in Sunday rig-out, was despondent and miserable as he stepped on to the quay.

'I'm glad Nellie is not here,' thought Walters.

'I'm thankful Bessie kept out of the road,' added Larry.

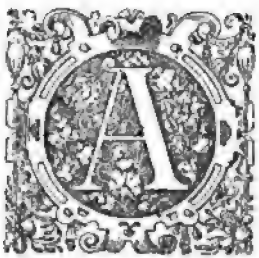
At the first public house the two men obtained courage for the coming disaster, and later entered the steamboat-owner's office, and were ushered into the presence of that gentleman, who smiled genially and presented a handshake of welcome to the mariners. He said:

'Mister Walters, I wish to appoint you as mate of the Masterpiece for a few voyages, when I shall be pleased to promote you to master. Captain Larry, when the transaction of my taking over the Senator is complete, I shall desire you to take charge of her, at, of course, an increased salary. The Masterpiece will be here only a fortnight; so I'd advise you both to skip and have a holiday while the opportunity offers.'

'He's the stuff,' Walters heard a voice he recognized say, and, looking into an out-of-the-way corner, discovered the big passenger regarding him. The man came across the private office.

'I am Mr. Slade,' he said, 'the cousin of your owner, and upon whom'—the man smiled and put a greeting hand out to Walters—'you swore vengeance.'

For a moment things real faded from the eyes of Walters. He forgot about steamboats and hard fate, and all the rest of it; and in place there rose a vision of dear-heart Nellie hugging him on the quay at Newcastle and giving him, his fifteen pounds per month and all he had fudged, a glorious and longed-for welcome.



# T the Chateau Cantelejo: A Story of Wellington's Spanish Campaign, by T. L. Trembley*

"LORD WELLINGTON wishes to see Captain Vesey at headquarters," said an orderly, coming to a sudden stop in front of a group of us, sitting or stretched at ease under some cork trees, after a hard day's march on the execrable Castilian roads.

"You're in for a blowing up now," said one.

"You're detailed to-night to inspect the out-posts," said another in mimicry of the Brigade Adjutant.

Groaning, I arose, and followed the soldier, inwardly cursing my luck, for I was dead tired with near a week's marching over the rough country roads of Old Castile, or rather over the plains and mountains themselves, for there were no roads.

Six days before the army had left Madrid, and daily our hardships had increased.

Passing through the camp, every arm of the service was represented. Here a park of artillery rested, with the horses grazing about and the gunners in their short jackets and funny little caps scattered about, cooking, eating, and engaged in the thousand little things that claim a soldier's attention. Now we passed a regiment of cavalry, with the men busily engaged in grooming their steeds, now the infantry, discussing their evening meal of beef and biscuit, caring for their arms or simply resting.

Finally I entered the large marquee of headquarters, preceded by the orderly, and found myself face to face with the Commander-in-Chief. He was seated at a camp table, while

*Written for Short Stories.

a secretary was busily writing on the opposite side, a spluttering candle which my entrance caused to flicker violently lighted the place. Lord Wellington was at this time in his prime, and as I gazed at his prominent features, so stern, so full of reserve force, bronzed and burnt by exposure, I could well realize why His Majesty's Government had entrusted him with the supreme command; for sagacity and perseverance were in every feature, in every line and curve of the slight wiry form, clad simply in a blue frock coat and gray trousers. The very white stock about his neck seemed as stiff and unyielding as its wearer's nature.

"Captain Vesey, you will bear these despatches to General Hill at Madrid, you will start at daybreak," he said in his clear, cold voice, all the while busy scratching away with his quill. In a moment he finished the message, and shaking some sand over the wet surface, tossed it across to the secretary, saying, "There Mountjoy, put that with the others." Then to me, "Take a dozen troopers with you as escort, and if the French should get you be sure and destroy the papers."

"Very well, your Lordship, any further orders?" said I. "No, your papers will be ready for you at daybreak," he answered. I saluted and withdrew to get what sleep I could, for I was not over-pleased at this despatch riding, much as I might have liked it at any other time.

We had just left Madrid, and it would simply be going over old ground, and besides the fatigue and danger, everyone expected a battle in a day or two, for a French army under General Clausel lay at Valladolid, only a good day's march away. This business would deprive me of it all, and of my chances for promotion. Mindful of my instructions, I selected a dozen stout fellows from my troop, with Sergeant Glenney as my officer, a great giant of a Yorkshireman, whose strength and good nature were famous in the Sixteenth. Then I threw myself on the ground near the blazing fire, and, wrapped in my great cloak was soon sound asleep.

Someone was shaking me violently, as I opened my eyes and sat up I heard Sergeant Glenney's voice saying, "Come sir, it be time to start." "All right, Sergeant, get the men and I'll be with you directly," said I. Making my way quickly to headquarters, I found the sleepy adjutant's clerk waiting, my despatches ready. "If you should run into the French be sure to destroy them," he cautioned.

And then, determined to take double precautions I said, "Well, I'll conceal them in my boot heel; can you make me out a set of bogus ones?" "Yes, certainly, a good idea," he said, setting about it at once. In a few minutes I had tucked them securely in a hollow place in my left boot heel, first removing a part of the leather and then neatly fastening the whole together. Then putting the false ones, signed and tied with the narrow red tape of headquarters, into my sabretasche, I went quickly back to where I had slept, and finding Sergeant Glenney and the men in readiness, mounted my little Irish mare "Dolly," and with a light touch of the spur we were off.

Thus, on the 6th of September, 1812, two hours before dawn, our little party departed from Lord Wellington's camp on a branch of the Adaja, in Castile, for Sir Rowland Hill's headquarters in Madrid.

Silently we rode, for it was chilly, and a heavy dew gave a dampness to the air that numbed one through and through. Presently the sun rose and we trotted gaily along, the men fully awake, laughing and joking in high spirits. So the day passed without notable occurrence, and as league after league was traversed the aspect of the country changed, becoming broken and hilly. When darkness came we had entered the rugged Castilian mountains, and bivouacked in a little gully, out of earshot of the rocky mountain path we had been following.

With dawn, we were in the saddle riding rapidly, and now I became somewhat careless. We were travelling at a quick trot, never thinking of danger, but intent only on getting forward, when a sharp turn in the road brought us point blank into a column of the enemy. How many there were I never knew, for as they discovered us they charged with yells and shots, and I had only time to cry "Save yourselves, men!" when the foremost were amongst us, cutting and fighting. For the next few minutes I was very busy, a huge French Cuirassier riding at me, crowding Dolly nearly off the road and slashing at me furiously. In a minute I snatched my pistol out, and shot him, and at the same instant Dolly lost her balance and together we rolled off the narrow road and head over heels down the steep mountain side, crashing over stones and bushes, finally landing at the bottom of a gully behind some stunted trees and shrubbery.

For some time I lay stunned and unable to arise. The sounds of conflict had ceased, only the distant tramp of horses

could be heard, together with a subdued jabber in French. In a few minutes Dolly arose and after shaking herself, began to nibble the scanty herbage as though nothing had happened. Pulling myself together, I found that I was unhurt beyond some severe bruises, and, on examining my good little mare, found only some scratches on her knees and sides, where she had struck in her descent. Realizing that I must get on at all events, I waited, perhaps, half an hour, then hearing nothing of the Frenchmen, I started up the rough mountain side towards the road, cautiously picking my way, step by step, leading Dolly, who proved as sure-footed as a mountain goat. We finally got safely back on the road, and I was on my way again, hoping that my fellows had escaped. Hour after hour I rode, and as it grew late in the afternoon the sky became clouded, and in a few minutes the storm broke in fury.

Soon the wild mountain scenery was shut out and the country became merely a great mist, while the wind blew sharp and chilling in my face. I was bewildered, in a white cloud of rain and wind, and could distinguish nothing. So it was with heartfelt gratitude that I discerned a great stone house directly ahead. Lights gleamed in the various windows, and, urging Dolly, I soon reached it and saw that it was a stone structure of ancient, ivy covered, grey stone, whose bastions and towers showed it to be of Mediæval date. Dismounting, a tattoo on the front gate from my pistol butt soon brought a sallow-faced Spanish serving man out. From him I learned that the place was the Chateau Cantelejo, the residence of Count Cantelejo, that the Count was in and would be pleased to welcome me. Blessing my lucky stars which had thus sent me shelter in my need, I first had him show me the stables, and, after seeing Dolly attended to and supplied with abundance of corn and hay, returned to the castle, and was conducted to a neat little chamber on an upper floor. Here I made a hasty toilet, and then, being as presentable as possible under the circumstances, made my way below, down a noble stairway, and was ushered into a great long drawing room.

Standing near the entrance was my host, such an extraordinary figure that I was unable to repress a slight sort of astonishment. His gigantic form towered full half a foot over my six feet, his body was enormously stout and heavy, with massive muscles on arms and shoulders.

He was clad in a gorgeous uniform of light blue cloth, heavily

embroidered with gold lace, while numerous orders and medals glittered on his breast. A thick growth of black hair and a heavy beard covered his huge head and the lower part of his face, only exposing his thin, aquiline nose; while a pair of thin, cruel lips and little, bright, black eyes, that shone with a cunning, cold glint, warned one to put no trust in him; but strangest of all his skin was a deep black. He was an East Indian, a Hindoo. At his side stood a little thin woman whose sickly yellow skin was rendered still yellower by her heavy brocaded dress of the same color. A necklace of large diamonds flashed and sparkled about her scraggy neck, while a sharp hooked nose and high bulging forehead, under which shone pale blue, lack-luster eyes, the right with a bad cast in it, gave her a most sinister look.

As I entered, murmuring an apology for my intrusion, the black man asked, bowing, "Whom have we the pleasure of welcoming?" "I am Captain Vesey of the British Army," I answered. "And I am Count Cantelejo. Allow me to present you to the Countess," he said, with a wave of his huge hand toward the little yellow woman, while I bowed, all the time wondering at this queer combination of black and yellow.

"And this lady is my step-daughter, Señorita Irene Cantelejo," said he, turning towards one of the large windows. Surprised, for I had not observed any other person, I saw standing near the window a young girl regarding me with pensive, sorrowful eyes. Her simple dress of some white material, together with her innocent, unaffected air made her seem like some poor frightened dove. My sympathy was at once enlisted, and my glance must have revealed it, for as our eyes met, a delicate flush spread over her face and she turned quickly away. I felt I had won a friend.

Dinner now being announced I gave my arm to the lovely Señorita, and we were soon seated in a great, high-ceiled dining-room discussing an excellent dinner for Spain, where everything is filled with garlic or red pepper. The Count was a voluble talker and kept up a continuous chatter, so the rest had only to listen quietly. Once while he thus ran on, all words, his napkin fell to the floor and in stooping to get it I noted with some curiosity that his left ear was gone, nothing but the orifice remained, which was usually concealed by his thick growth of hair. As he sat up, I saw him regarding me with a look of astonishment or rather recognition; following his glance I saw

that it was fixed on my watch chain from which hung my seal with the family crest: A mailed hand holding an olive branch, for my father was a younger son, my Uncle Thomas inheriting the estate at Abbeyleix, as Lord Knapton.

"Where did you get that seal?" he asked, breathlessly.

"It was my father's," I answered stiffly, for I did not relish his manner nor his look, for he was scowling like an ogre.

"And he was also an English officer?"

"Yes, he was with Sir Arthur in India, and was desperately wounded at Seringapatam."

"Ha! Allah be praised!" he shouted, striking the table a mighty blow that made the dishes dance, and regarding me with a terrible look, brows knit, face working, and his body drawn together as though he was about to leap at my throat.

"Your behavior is rather peculiar, perhaps you will explain it," said I, rising and facing him, as soon as I could recover from my astonishment. The Countess laid her hand on his arm and murmured some soothing words, and the Señorita looked on in amazement.

In a moment he recovered himself, and forcing a laugh said that he suffered from a vertigo, and apologized for his conduct, and in a few moments was laughing and chatting as usual, while I sat listening and surmising as to the cause of his queer action, resolving to leave as early as possible in the morning. Soon the ladies rose and left us to our wine and cigars, and in a short time I suggested that I would retire.

"Certainly, certainly, let me give you a glass of liqueur first, it is made by the Carmelites and is a famous brand," he said, striding to the dresser, and pouring some dark-colored stuff into a couple of small glasses. His back was turned for a single instant and I saw his shoulders jerking as though his hands were moving rapidly; then he turned and handed me one of the glasses. I raised it and was about to swallow it when my eye caught his, he was watching me with a strange intentness that had something sinister in it. I looked in the little glass and could detect a fine, almost indistinguishable sediment at the bottom. Instantly suspicious, I loosened my grip and it fell to the floor, shattered into a dozen pieces, while the Count's face, strive as he would, betrayed disappointment and rage.

"Ah, too bad; let me get you another," he said, in pretended concern.

"No, thank you, I'll have no more," I answered coldly. "It's time to retire, I think," I added, rising, intending to quit the room. At that moment, and without the slightest warning, I felt the floor beneath me suddenly give way and was shot down with frightful rapidity, landing stunned and bruised, at last, on a stone floor far below, and in pitchy darkness. Far above, in the opening through which I had fallen, I could see the evil face of the Count, like some huge black imp leering at me, my sabretasche in his hands.

"You English dog, your despatches shall be in Soult's hands by morning, and you shall die like a rat," he hissed, and with a shrill, hoarse laugh the wretch disappeared, the heavy trap-door closed and I was left in darkness.

Thankful that at least my despatches were safe, for the real ones were snug in my boot heel, I racked my brain to ascertain why this man should have developed such a sudden murderous hatred for me.

Why had he become so enraged when I mentioned my father's being at Seringapatam? Why had he stared at the Knapton crest? Oft had I heard my father relate the story of that battle, how the troops had crept in darkness into the trenches, the tedious waiting, the wild scramble over the walls and the desperate, bloody work that followed.

I recollected his encounter with the huge Mahratta, who held a portion of the wall, slaying all who ventured near him; until my father had brought him down by a lucky stroke from his sabre, cutting through his shoulder, and taking off his ear.

Ah, that was it! At once it dawned on me this black count was the man, and the crest? Of course he had recognized it, for my father had always worn it during his lifetime. What a picture was conjured in my mind as I lay there awaiting my fate! Amidst all the dreadful din of battle this giant, half-naked, his black body stained and bloody, half-concealed by the volumes of sulphurous smoke that came drifting from the flashing batteries, standing on the crumbling walls, dealing wounds and death to our men, at each sweep of his heavy scimiter. What mercy could I, the son of his conqueror, hope for from this fanatic savage? What fate had he in store for me?

I was answered sooner than I had reckoned. For some little time I had heard the gurgle and splutter of flowing water; now a chilliness at my feet as I restlessly paced my narrow prison

caused me to put my hand down to the stone floor. Yes, there was water an inch deep.

I felt over the walls carefully, but could find no opening, not a crack, and all the time the water was flowing, getting deeper so rapidly that soon it reached my knees, and I understood with a chill despair at my heart that this was to be my fate, this little stone cell my grave. I was to be drowned like a rat in a trap.

Oh, the horror, the despair! To smother in this horrible darkness, abandoned; shut in this thick blackness. What a death for a soldier! For me who had ever thought of death in battle, amidst the wild shouts of victory, with comrades, the roar of cannon, and honor.

For a time I was not myself, I beat and raged, shouted curses on that black beast, and prayed to grasp his throat. In a few minutes I was quiet, exhausted by my violence, and as I stood there breathless, a faint sound reached my ears. I listened in suspense. Yes, there came a distant scratching over my head, near a corner. For what seemed hours I stood and listened to that faint sound, which might mean salvation for me. Then it grew louder and I kicked three times with my heel against the solid masonry. In a moment three answering raps came to me.

It must be a friend, for who else would take this trouble?

So it continued, ever getting louder, while the water rose slow and sure until it reached my waist. Whoever it was must hurry if they would save me, and I gave the signal three times to let them know.

It was answered in a minute and the pounding went on, now so rapidly that I could not count the blows of the hammer. Then, after what was ages to me, a narrow thread of light broke my prison gloom. Ah! how blessed that faint light was. I grasped the heavy stone and with a mighty strain and wrench it slowly came away, and fell into the water with a great splash. Blinded for a moment I stood still and then I heard my name called, and saw Señorita Irene standing in a little room whose floor was on a level with my head, a hammer and chisel in her hands, her dress all covered with the loosened mortar, her hands cut and bleeding from the rough task.

"Quick, Captain, you must escape while there's time. The Count may come any moment, there's your sword," said she, pointing to where it lay on a small table. I snatched it and

buckled it about me in an instant, all the while pouring out my thanks and seizing her hands covered them with kisses.

"You must get away from here at once, the Count will kill you if he finds you. That passage will lead you to the back of the chateau, where you can go out through a window. Now go," she urged.

"And you? What will become of you, when he finds out that I have escaped?" I asked.

"I? Oh, I will have to take my chances. I don't suppose my mother will let him kill me," she said, with a sad little laugh.

"Ah, no, I will not leave you; come with me, I will see you safe within our lines, where you may find your friends," said I.

"I have no friends, my father was my only friend. Since he died—died! I now believe that wretch murdered him and with my mother's knowledge. He is not Count Cantelejo, he is only an impostor," and she buried her face in her hands, weeping bitterly.

"Come, then, come with me. I owe you my life and I will see justice done, you are not safe here," said I.

So half leading her, we went into the corridor, a dim, ill-lighted place, and had just reached a sharp turn when, with a rush and a shrill scream of rage, like an infuriated bull elephant, the Count burst upon us. His huge body only half clad, his eyes burning with hate and fury, nostrils distended, the dull red lips parted in a snarl like some wild beast's, disclosing his sharp white teeth, while his heavy beard seemed to twist and work with fury. With another shout he sprang at me, striking a dreadful blow with a huge, broad-bladed scimiter and although I leaped back, I received it full on the chest and my earthly career would have closed then and there if his blade had not struck my small, but solid, brass gorget, which was neatly chopped in two. The force of his blow was spent by this, however, so that I only received a flesh wound, but was thrown to the floor, while my opponent staggered directly over me for an instant, which was sufficient, for shortening my sabre, I drove it full force into his body. He gave a bellow of agony, struck a few ineffective blows and fell over on his back with a crash that made the building shake, just missing the form of the Countess, who, I now saw, had been standing behind him, a large pistol in her hand. Without a word she raised it and, aiming at me, pulled the trigger; it missed fire, the powder only

flashing in the pan. With a cry of rage she examined it, and as she held it pointing towards her it went off with a loud report, having only hung fire, and she fell, screaming and rolling in agony, torrents of blood pouring from her side. Irene flew to her, striving to staunch the blood, but in spite of all her efforts the wretched Countess soon lay still and dead in her arms.

"Come away from this cursed place," said I, leading her weeping and distracted to the upper floor, where she sank on a divan faint from excitement, whilst I ran for water to the side-board in the dining-room; I encountered a half-dozen servants, and was half fearful of an attack from them, for they were armed and as evil-looking Spaniards as I ever saw. So with the water bottle in one hand and my pistol in the other I ordered them to their quarters, then hurried back to the drawing-room where I had left Irene. She had arisen and now was standing by one of the long windows gazing out.

"See Captain, you are safe now, here come your country-men," she said, pointing to the rocky road. I looked and saw coming rapidly towards the castle (in the bright moonlight, the storm having ceased as quickly as it came up), a score or more of cavalry, whom I instantly recognized by their red dolmans as the lancers of Berg.

"I must conceal myself and you must also, if you would be saved insult and maybe worse; they are Frenchmen," said I.

"But their red coats?" she said.

"I know, they are French lancers from Soult's Army; let's go into the little stone cell, we may escape them there," I answered.

A minute or two sufficed to get in, and setting the little table against the hole where the stone had been we waited breathlessly, waist deep in water, which had stopped flowing from some cause. While we crouched there in the darkness we heard shots and shouting, and then heavy tramping overhead, loud talk, and oaths in Gallic. We heard them searching and ransacking in every direction in the accustomed manner of the French. Then after a long period of waiting the tramp of men sounded in the road, a shot or two was fired, and then a loud volley rang out, followed by a sound that made me thrill with joy—a hearty British cheer, the clash of weapons, yells, groans, curses, and all the sounds of hand-to-hand fighting. I climbed from my hiding-place, ran to the window and saw my gallant band of rascals amongst the enemy, who, taken

wholly by surprise, could make no effective resistance, nor reach their horses, but were being chased and hunted like rabbits. With a word to Irene I rushed below, but only in time to see the last of them surrender, while my appearance was greeted with astonishment. Sergeant Glenney explaining that supposing me slain they had succeeded in beating off their pursuers after a severe race, only to find themselves lost in the mountains where they had since wandered about, until finally seeing the chateau lights, they had arrived thus opportunely.

A sharp lookout was maintained for the remainder of the night which was passed in quiet, if not in slumber, and an hour before dawn, after interring the bodies of the Countess, the ferocious Mahratta and the lancers, we departed, the Señorita Irene riding beside me on my good little Dolly, while I bestrode one of the dead lancer's horses.

That night we reached Madrid and my despatches were safely delivered to Sir Rowland. Irene found shelter and friends with some of our officers' wives, who, interested in her romantic story and our mutual devotion, showered attentions upon her, and shortly before the regiment was ordered home at the peace we were married.

# EARLY Experiences of a Motorist. By E. P. Wilberforce *

IT was the hot weather in August that brought the vague suggestion to a settled point. As Sophia says, "One must get about;" and getting about entails something to get about in, legs being no longer of much importance in the human economy. The dust was very dusty and the hills very hilly, and Sophia discovered that her pony's knees were going wrong. He had come to us from the level roads of Norfolk, and there he had been full of energy and purpose, but Devonshire hills had taken all heart out of him.

"I think," said Sophia, as the pony recovered himself after an unmistakable stumble, "that we will send this little beast away before he falls down."

"Yes," said I, "and then——"

"And then we will get a motor-car. You see it will be a lot cheaper in the long run."

I hoped so then, and I hope so still; but perhaps the car has not yet run long enough.

"It must be cheaper," Sophia repeated. "Petrol costs only ——" and then followed statistics showing the comparative advantage of the mechanically propelled vehicle over the horse-drawn. The idea had been simmering for some time before this, and we had both studied the optimistic views of the papers devoted to motor-cars; but Sophia is a born statistician, though weak in the multiplication table, and always fells me when she quotes figures. In the end it was settled—Sophia settled it—that I should write about a steam car that very night. Steam, we both agreed, was the power for us.

Thus it was that the first week in September saw a man,

* From The Badminton Magazine.

with a mind as bare of all knowledge of mechanical principles as a well-regulated party slate should be of all political principles, following with painful perplexity the lucid description of the various parts of a steam car as set forth by an expert armed with an electric lamp. The car was mine, and the expert was telling me all about it in the crypt of the company's warehouse.

I had suggested to Sophia that she should come too and pick up the bits that I missed, but she seemed to think that her presence might confuse the instructor.

There is no incentive to courage more powerful than ignorance, and a few days later when the car arrived at our Devonshire cottage Sophia and I, with scarcely a qualm, embarked on our first voyage alone on a steam engine. I had had rather less than half an hour's instruction in driving—Sophia had had none—and when I look back I can only marvel at our audacity.

"It is quite simple," I said to Sophia. I had lit the fire with much difficulty and bad language, being still unused to burns, had eventually got up steam, and was feeling a little proud and superior in consequence. "You see, all you have to do is to push this handle forward and the thing starts; when you pull it back it stops. Here's the brake under one foot and the bell under the other, and this lever to steer with."

"Yes," said she; "but if you want to go to the right do you push the lever or pull it?"

"That," said I, "I forget; but we shall soon find out on the road."

"Doubtless," replied Sophia; "but what are these other handles for?"

"Oh! they are to do with the fire and the water," I answered airily. "I don't exactly know what they do, but we will try them all presently."

And so we started. The engine did exactly what was expected of it. The bell rang merrily in response to a sympathetic pressure of the foot, and we sailed down the straight road towards the blue hills that screen us from the sea.

We picked up quite a lot of information about the steering on the occasion of meeting our first wagon. We found that pushing the lever one way sent us into the horses, and pushing it the other sent us up on to the bank. That point settled—and the runaway wagon well out of sight—we decided that Sophia should try her hand at driving.

We changed places, and with a face like a Spartan woman's she grasped the throttle-lever. On we went again, our erratic and zigzag course pleasantly punctuated by "Ohs!" in crescendo from Sophia, as she realized each moment (to forget the next) that the direction of our course depended on the movement of her left hand.

She would have it that, by this time, I was an expert engineer, so whenever the chain creaked or the exhaust steam popped, or any other unseemly sound was heard, "What makes that noise?" she asked.

"Oh, that," I replied, exhibiting more confidence than I possessed, "is nothing. It always does that."

We learnt all about reversing the engine when the time came to return. Sophia had again changed places with me and I essayed to turn. The road was not quite wide enough.

"Now, one of these things," said I, "is the reversing lever. I think this is the one," and I pushed the lever over and put on steam.

Sure enough it was—I was quite right—and next moment we found ourselves charging up a steep bank on the opposite side of the road, backwards. Fortunately, the bank was very steep, or I think we should have gone on forever, for, finding the brake did not hold when running backwards, I was too much taken aback to think of putting the engine to "ahead" again. Happily the steepness of the pitch slowed us enough to afford time for reflection, and presently with a sigh of relief we found ourselves in the road again and facing the way we would go.

I don't mind confessing that I have not yet got over a dislike to using the reversing gear. If we want to turn in the road I prefer to get out and pull the car back. We did reverse once, and got off quite cheaply in only smashing up a bicycle that stood by the curb. We might have gone through a shop window.

I have no head for engineering and never had, but by constant contemplation of our steamer I think I am beginning to grasp the principle of the thing. They say that the Thibetan adept attains to great knowledge and power by lying on his back under a Bo tree. Certainly you can pick up a good deal by lying on your back for an hour or two under a motor-car.

The conclusion I have come to is that the engine just fills the place of a man on a bicycle. Taking a good breath of steam it

thrusts down first one foot then the other. The pedals turn the chain wheel, and the chain turns the back wheels of the car, and the car runs—until something gives way.

Things will give way. I am told that in domestic life a good deal of friction is saved by giving way. I know that in motor-cars a good deal of giving way is caused by friction. I don't know any circumstances more difficult to look pleasant under than being towed home at the tail of a cart in your motor-car. On these occasions Sophia always gets into the cart and chats affably with the driver, as though she were being taken out for an airing, while I have to sit in the car to steer it and submit to the jeers of the populace, trying to look as if I preferred it that way.

But the little disasters that have led to this undignified position have all been repairable, and, as Sophia says after every smash, "Now we know what to do when that goes wrong."

The crowning merit of the steam car is its silence. The petrol car may be faster, but as it rattles along the road with its thousand explosions of gas a minute it sounds to me like an armored train with its quick-firing gun in full play. Every living thing is aware of its approach while it is still two miles away.

The steam car steals noiselessly along the road. The rabbits nibbling by the roadside nibble on unconscious of danger till the car has passed them. The green woodpecker, with a yell of derisive laughter, swings across the road in front of us as we drive through the woods, and the squirrel on his way home with a beech nut for a winter meal sits up on his bushy tail to scrutinze us and not till long after we are gone by remembers to run and hide behind the nearest tree.

It is surprising that on a steamer it is possible to get nearer to animals and birds without frightening them than one can even on a bicycle. I think it is because there is no movement of the feet. Stand at a field gate near the edge of a wood, and if you remain perfectly still, moving neither hand nor foot, in a few minutes the life that your arrival has interrupted begins again. The rabbits emerge cautiously from the burrows; they see you standing there, but as long as you don't move they see no harm in you. The crouching pheasant in the stubble begins feeding again. A prowling rat will pass close by your feet. But move a foot or lift an arm and instantly all is

consternation and flight. In a steam car, beyond the almost imperceptible movement of the hand on the steering lever, the only action visible is the advancing mass of the car, and that seems to have no disturbing significance for animals.

Day after day in the glorious autumn weather we drove the little car down to the sea coast, hitherto a long and wearisome drive or a stuffy journey by train, but now a pleasant hour's run over heathery moors. Hardly a day all through the winter have we found the weather too bad for a drive.

One great advantage that a motor-car has over a horse is that one is independent of inns and stables. With a well-filled basket an *al fresco* luncheon or tea can be enjoyed in the wood or in a quiet by-road, anywhere where there is a track for the wheels, without thought of a tired and hungry horse. When the fire is turned low, the car will stand for hours with no need of attention.

But Sophia claims that the climax of enjoyment is to be found in driving the car at night.

During the winter we have had many opportunities of experiencing this, to me, I admit, somewhat fearful joy. The darkness adds enormously to the sensation of speed, and one seems to be rushing at a desperate pace into the unknown. Certainly Sophia's courage is greater than mine, for she can sit calmly straining her eyes at the darkness, and what the darkness may hold, with no power of stopping the car should disaster suddenly loom ahead. It is bad enough when one has a hand on the throttle-lever and a foot on the brake.

And at night more than at any other time the silence of the steam car is a merit. It is distressing enough, even in broad daylight, to people with any lingering remains of the unfashionable quality of modesty, to go clattering along disturbing man and beast with the persistent self-assertion of an explosion engine; but he must be a hooligan indeed who can bear to make all that noise under the moonlight, in quiet lanes, scaring the owls and bats, surprising even the night-jar, and disturbing the cottagers' early rest, without feeling himself grow uncomfortably hot with very shame.

# THE Clock Key: The Story of a Crime, by Mary R. P. Hatch, Author of "The Missing Man," etc. Illustrations by R. K. Ryland*

We approached the hamlet, for it could scarcely be called a village, at about four in the afternoon. My friend, a bright young journalist, of twenty-seven or eight, eyed the sorry-looking landlord of the sorry-looking inn with some distaste, in spite of the fact that we were tired and wanted refreshment.

"His hair looks like a last year's robin's nest," said Ralph, comically. It did. The man's words, if not exactly hearty, were yet sufficiently cordial.

* Written for Short Stories.

"Wall, now, I've been looking for ye 'most a week," he drawled, giving a jerk to one of his suspenders that drew his pantaloon above his foot as if for the purpose of giving it a hint at locomotion.

"Why should you have been looking for us?" I asked, surprised.

"Nothin' special, only I've averaged someone here to put up as often as once a month, and it's goin' on two now; so I thought 'twas most time for someone to happen 'long. Want to be put up, don't ye?"

"Yes; can you lodge us and give us some supper?"

"Sartin, sartin, that's what we're here for, to furnish entertainment for man and beast."

"He would furnish entertainment for a whole circus, make a man laugh at his own funeral," said Ralph in a low tone as we entered the inn.

We had been told of the strange hamlet long before we reached it. It was part of an abandoned town, abandoned except for this old-fashioned tavern on the outskirt. Trees had grown up in the streets, and small bushes shot up through loose boards in the forsaken houses. The church, that had been a fine one in its better days, now leaned to one side, while through the broken windows could be seen a slim, white birch sapling growing up straight to a height of five or six feet from the place where the pulpit had been uprooted. There were quivering bright green leaves on it, and a bird nesting in its scanty foliage.

All these evidences of a by-gone day we noted with interest, as after supper we took a walk about the place.

"That church used to be all *friscoed* overhead," our host told us on our return, as we sat in the parlor. "Be you writing folks?" he continued, as my companion got out his note-book, and I my paints and brushes.

"Well, rather," said my friend, with a smile.

"'Cos, if you be, I've got a curus writing that I found in the cubboard when we fust moved here. Seems to be suthin' or ruther the tavernkeeper wrote himself about a man's being murdered here. I dunno as it ever reely happened, and I dunno *as* it didn't. It reads as if it was true, but I don't take no great stock in it, though they do say a man was murdered here some fifty year ago. It was all thickly settled here then. My grandfather was the minister;

*yes, sir*, my grandfather was the minister," with a sickly smile changing the look of satisfaction, as he saw our surprise. "He was a good man, but he never made nuthin' scurcely preaching, and there was thirteen childun, father was the' leventh. He was dog poor. Wall, I'll git the writing and you can see what it means, or whether it don't mean nothin'."

I kept on with my paints and brushes, setting them out for use next day, and Ralph took the book the landlord handed him. It was an old dog-eared note-book, and the writing was faded. I saw little to interest me in the outside, and Ralph seemed rather bored; but after a half hour's reading he suddenly straightened up in his chair and said in a strange tone:

"Listen. This is a curious tale. God only knows whether it is true or false."

The landlord had left us. The damp logs spluttered and smoked in the old-fashioned fireplace, the kerosene lamp burned dimly on the light stand. I sat in a splint-bottomed rocking-chair, Ralph in an oak one, such as was in use fifty years before. The old clock stared, voiceless, from the corner. It was an eight-day clock with mahogany casing and a miniature ship painted across the face.

"He may have sat in this very chair," said Ralph.

"Who?" I asked.

"Why, the murdered man. Listen."

And I listened.

"October 27, 1840. We moved in last week, Nancy and I and the housen stuff. Also we have three cows, some hens and a pig. No horse as yet, but we may buy one shortly. Our sign is hung out, and a high wind rattles it a good deal. A man painted it yesterday. 'Travellers' Home' is all there is on it. He wanted to paint 'Entertainment for Man and Beast,' but I said we could not afford to pay for so much painting and paint this year. We shall need to be very frugal. So I told Nancy. We shall charge all we can get, for it costs much to live. I have two barrels of cider in the cellar, and one barrel of rum. Likewise we have five quintals of fish, some pickeled herring and some hams. God willing, we shall make a living. But no travellers have come yet.

"Nov. 1. A man came yesterday. He was driving a cow to Derry, and stopped for a glass of rum. I charged

him a shilling. Three men came this morning and stayed till after dinner. Scarce had they gone when a handsome chaise drove up with a gentleman and lady in it. She had on a silk calash and a pelisse, so Nancy called it; he wore a high hat and a yellow waistcoat. They seemed genteel people, and paid well. I bought a horse to-day.

"Nov. 3. A man has just come to stay over night. My wife is getting his supper. I can see her through the door and I can see him, too. Another man has just come in. They can eat their supper together. I like this writing I've taken to lately, and before I put up my book I will try to set down how they both look. The first one is short and fat and sandy-haired. He has a frocking coat, and he fetched in his whip. By that token I know he is a teamster, and most like is going to Portland for supplies. Joshua is putting up his horse, I dare say. I have hired Joshua to help about the stable, but he does not sleep here nor eat here, but lives at home and comes to work days. The sandy-haired man has been drinking a good deal. He has just taken out a leather bag, and is shaking it in the other man's face. I will go out and see what is the matter. The other man looks strange. He has black hair and wears a black cap tied——"

"Nov. 4. Strange things have happened since last night. I scarce know how to set them down with ink and quill. But I will do my best. 'Twill be a hard tale to write. Last night, as I was setting down the day's doing, as I made up my mind to do when I moved here, counting it a likely thing to do both for amusement and to improve myself in the art of handwriting, I saw the sandy-haired man shake his bag in the face of the black-haired man. It rattled, and I surmised the bag to be full of coins. 'Fool!' I said, 'to show your money like that. Better to have hid it away than to have fetched it inside.'

"I went out and spoke both the men fair. The dark man took off his cap and hung it on a nail in the entry as I showed him. He said the other man was 'pretty well corned,' and I said he was. But that was all we spoke before supper.

"We talked a little after supper. The sandy-haired man said his name was Silas Horne. He was from up Lisbon way, and was taking a load of hams and pelts to market. He told us that he had just sold a piece of wild land and had the money with him, five hundred dollars, the most of it in

gold; and he poured it out in a heap on the table. How it glittered! It minded me of a heap I saw when I was a boy. The clock struck ten strokes, long and far apart, and I got up to wind it, for I recollected it was Saturday night, and I always wound it once a week, though it was an eight-day clock. I took the key from my waist-coat pocket, and turned to the light to blow the dirt from it, when I saw the dark man looking in a gloating, calculating way at the pile of gold. There was craft in that look. There was murder in it. It struck me cold and chill.

"'Put up your gold, man,' I cried, 'and hie you to bed. You'd better let me keep it for you till morning. 'Twill be full safer. And you,' I said to the other man, 'what may your name be?'

"'My name may be Jeemes Smith, but it may not, too,' and he laughed in impudent fashion as though he had said a rare thing worth the laughing at. He saw I was angered, and so he said with more civility, 'I am Calvin Stearns from Portsmouth way, and I'll go to bed, if you'll show me my bed.'

"So Nancy gave each man a candle in the iron candlesticks, and showed them to their bedrooms. Calvin Stearns to the one above the entry, just at the head of the stairs, the other to the dark bedroom that opened from the kitchen, just as I told her to. Afterwards I followed him—it was after Stearns had gone to bed—and I told him where to hide his bag of gold, between the feather bed and straw bed. 'For,' said I, 'I liked not the looks of the man that calls himself Calvin Stearns. He looks to me like a robber.'

"'Does he so?' asked Silas Horne, all in a cold fright. 'I'll take to the road for all I'll sleep in a house where robbers bide.' So then I eased his mind by saying I would see that no harm came to him. So he quieted down, and soon I heard him snoring hard, for he was tired and in liquor. But Calvin Stearns was wakeful. I heard him turning in bed as if greatly troubled in mind.

"I bolted the front door and put up the chain to the back door, but I did not go to bed till one o'clock, and then I fain would have slept, for I was tired with my day's work of threshing beans. But as I lay there thinking, Nancy gave a scream and sat bolt up in bed, throwing her arms wildly. 'What is 't?' I cried, 'In God's name what is 't.'

"So then she fell to trembling till the ruffles of her night-cap shook like aspen leaves.

"'Tis the man. I dreamt he was murdered.'

"'Foolish woman,' I said, 'lay down and sleep. He is not murdered. Hear him snore, the drunken rascal.'

"She raised her head and listened. 'Yes, 'tis he, surely. He is not dead. But oh, Nathan,' I saw it so plain, the man steal in the dark bedroom, with knife behind him and candle held high above his head. Silas Horne lay asleep with his throat bare. And then Nathan, oh, Nathan! he raised his knife and plunged it deep in the man's throat. He gurgled and gasped. Oh, it was so real, so real!'

"'The man, did you see his face? He that did the deed?'

"'No.'

"'Was it the other man, think you, he that calls himself Calvin Stearns?'

"'I don't know, I don't know. Seems like it was not Calvin Stearns, but another man,' and then she fell a trembling more than ever.

"'Think,' I said, 'who it was.'

"'Let me alone,' she cried, for I shook her roughly, I fear me, her words so upset me.

"'I saw but his shoulders.'

"'God almighty!' I said, 'Whose shoulders were they?'

"'How should I know a man's shoulders?' I want to sleep, but first I will see that the man is all right,' and she stole softly to the door of the dark bedroom, and I tiptoed after her.

"He was asleep, and Nancy went back to bed and soon fell asleep, too. As for me, I thought of her dream, and it

so distraught me that I could not sleep. Nancy was always weak minded. I should never have married her but that she is a good cook. A man cannot have everything in one woman, so I've been told, and to eat three meals a day of what goes against a man's stomach is worse than wedding a woman of poor wit, given to bad dreams. Being upset with worriments I slept but poorly, and so 'twas late when I opened my eyes the next morning. Nancy was getting breakfast, and I got up and went out to milk my three cows.

"Just as I was hanging the milk stool on the peg, Nancy came flying down to the barn, shrieking like a loon."

"'Oh, Nathan, he's dead, he's murdered, just as I dreamt last night!'

"Her eyes were starting from their sockets, her hands were flung up over her head, and she threw herself on to me and stared into my face as though she had gone crazed.

"'Cease,' I said, speaking as to a weak creature, such as she is. 'If he is dead, we cannot help it. We can only see that justice is done. 'Twas the other man did it, and I will see to it that he does not leave the house. You must help me bind him, Nancy, with the new bed cord fetched home yesterday.'

"'But he is gone.'

"'Who is gone?'

"'The other man, Calvin Stearns, is gone. He is not in his room. I went there first to call him to breakfast. I rapped three times, then as he did not answer and there was no sound I pushed the door open, and he was gone.'

"'Are you sure he is not somewhere about the place? He may be washing at the trough.'

"'No, I have looked. Then I went to call the other man, and he was dead. A deep gash in his throat, and the blood is dried. He laid on his back. 'Twas just as I dreamt.'

"'Twas a strange case. I was upset almost as much as Nancy, when I went to look at him. 'Tis a harsh sight to see a murdered man lying in a man's inn with a gash in his throat like that that killed Silas Horne. May I never see the like again, though I live to be fourscore!

"'He was murdered for his money,' I said to Nancy. 'Now we will look and see if his money is not gone.'

"So then we searched between the feather bed and straw bed, and the bag of money was gone.

"'He has got a long start, maybe of three or four hours, but we can catch him,' I cried; 'but give me first my breakfast, for all this makes my stomach rise up.'

"So Nancy hastened with the breakfast, and I ate and drank heartily. Then Joshua saddled my horse, and I rode post haste to the next town where lived the sheriff, Dwight Cartright. Then with sheriff and posse I rode back, and at high noon we started out to scour the country. We have ridden all day. The men ate their dinner and again their supper at my tavern. My wife set good victuals and drink before them, and while they were eating the sheriff questioned her about her dream.

"'Strange,' said he , 'to dream of a deed like that before it happened! How do you know it was before? He might have been dead at the time.'

"'No,' says Nancy, 'he was not killed until long after that.'

"'She is right,' I said. 'She was so torn in her mind that we both went to look. He was sleeping quietly, except that he snored.'

"'By my spurs and crupper,' he cried, 'I never heard a tale like that! 'Twas a warning most like. Too bad that the warning should come to naught.'

"And then they all fell to talking of warnings and many strange happenings they knew of, or had heard, but all agreed they were less strange than that Nancy should dream of a murder before it was ever done at all.

"Now that the sheriff and posse are gone and the house still, I have written this account exactly as it occurred, so that if anything should be found out later, or any inquiries made, this writing could be referred to. It is true, as God is my witness, every word I have written. I have read it to my wife and she agrees with me. My wife is much changed. She looks shrunk and old, and she goes peering about into cupboards and starts when the wind blows or a door is opened or shut. Women are weak vessels. Here am I, a man, and it vexes me scarce a bit, although 'tis a sad thing to have a man murdered in our tavern as was Silas Horne over night. His friends will be seeking him, no doubt, in a few days. His nag and load are still in my barn.

"Nov. 10. Calvin Stearns has not been discovered, but word has come from down below, where he used to live in

Portsmouth, that he has a bad repute. He is a hard drinker, and has been thought to work with a counterfeiting gang. He has most like gone to Canada, and if so he will never be heard of more in these parts. He has no kin here.

"Silas Horne was buried in the burying-ground at the meeting-house. The minister is very sick, so Circuit Rider Harkness preached the sermon in the parlor room at the tavern, and a godly sermon it was that took two hours and a half to the delivery. I was scarce ever edified so much. It was a scorching sermon, that 'twould have done Calvin Stearns good to have listened to. For me, I like to hear a good, red hot sermon like that, but I take no great heed to any, for to my mind man is as grass, he dies and that is the end of all, Silas Horne, Calvin Stearns, Nancy and I, here to-day and gone to-morrow. It matters not how nor why we die, since we die. So I think and so my father thought before me. If there be a God, we are as naught to him. A horse is as good as a man, better than some men.

"After the funeral, Ebenezer Bent, a cousin of Silas Horne's, took the nag with him, but he sold the hams to me. They will make good eating.

"Dec. 3. People come and go to and from the large towns, and they stop here to fodder their teams, to eat or to drink. We have good custom. Few taverns have better. Nancy is a good cook, and I am always in the tap room to give out cider or rum, or Madeira to gentlemen when they call for the finer liquors.

"No news has been heard of the man who murdered Silas Horne. I misdoubt if he is ever heard from.

"March (probably the following year). I have not writ much of late in my book. There is but little to tell, for the days lap one on the other so there is no great change. But Nancy is ailing. She has ailed for some months. The Indian doctor has treated her with roots and herbs, but she gets no whit better with all the dosing. Nancy began to fail when Silas Horne was murdered. She has not been right since. 'Tis odd and upsetting to see her go about the house with her mind anywhere but at her task.

"'Throw it off, whatever 'tis that ails you. No need to fret about what can't be helped,' I said to her one day.

"She burst out crying and trembling and choking like a crazy woman when I said that, till I grew mad with her at her folly.

"'What is it?' I said. 'Anyone would swear 'twas you that killed the man yourself, and I begin to misdoubt me you did, only I cannot see how you could have done it without my knowing it. But it was you or someone you know that was hid in the house. Where is that misbegotten brother of yours? Was he in the house that night unbeknown to me?'

"'He died long gone. You know he died, Nathan,' says Nancy.

"'I know you said he died. But, Nancy, if you do not stop such works as these I shall hold that either you or someone you know of did the deed that night, and mayhaps killed the other man, too. No one rightly knows that one man killed 'tother,' I said.

"'But what became of Calvin Stearns? His body was never found.'

"'It may have been dragged off and buried,' I said, and then to turn her thoughts I asked if the clock key had been found yet.

"She said 'No,' and then more cheerful like she went about the house.

"But 'tis a mystery what became of that key. It has never been seen since the night of the murder. 'Twas in my pocket, I recollect putting it there after I wound the clock that night. But it was not in my pocket the next time I wanted it, a week later. What makes it worse, no other key can be found to wind the clock, and so it does not run, for no locksmith lives near, and they say 'twill be hard to get one made. 'Tis an old clock, and a good clock, that has run many a year. I miss its *click*, *clack*, *tick*, *tack*. The clock lent me by Neighbor Jones loses time and is a vexation.

"April 7. Poor Nancy is dead. She died at two of the day. She was sick but a few hours, but she suffered greatly in mind as well as body. She seemed to see over and over again the murdered man, Silas Horne, and she cried out again and again that she saw *shoulders*.

"'Shoulders, Oh, the shoulders!' she would screech; 'I know the shoulders, they are *his* shoulders.'

"'What does she mean?' Mrs. Jones asked me, and I told her I didn't rightly know. It might be the shoulders of pork she had in pickle or it might be the shoulders of the man she dreamt of, he that did the murder, I said to Mrs. Jones, and then I told her what Nancy had told me again and again,

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] Nancy is gone. I have hired a woman to work and do the work that Nancy did, and I pay her nine shillings a week. 'Tis more than she earns, being so much less than she wastes. I watch her what I can, but true it is that a woman can throw out with a spoon more than a man can shovel in."

And so ended the reading. The story of the murder of one man and the disappearance of another, poor Nancy's dream and her death. Those strange words of hers, what did they mean? Did she kill the man herself after dreaming [illegible] done? Did she commit the deed in her sleep, or did [illegible] that she knew kill him, her brother, perhaps, as [illegible] had said to her. It was a rank mystery.

[illegible] brother, and then we got up and approached [illegible] still kept the silence unbroken all these years. [illegible] could it start all those wheels and [illegible] the pendulum, would the hand strike

the hour? And that great silent face, with its tale of hours untold for half a century, what had it seen that night as it peered over the landlord's shoulders when he turned to blow into the key and at that moment caught the murderous look in the eyes of one man watching the other man's pile of gold?

"What do you think is the key to the mystery," asked Ralph, and I, for some reason unknown to myself, answered "The clock key." Probably the answer was suggested by the terms of his question. At all events we thought no more about the tale, and when we rode away the following day we never expected to hear anything further of the story, or to visit the inn again.

However, we did visit it, and it was just five years later. A glorious autumnal day with a glow over heaven and earth such as comes only when the green turns to red and golden and brown in the foliage, and the sun shines through them as it does through cathedral windows.

I was five years older, and five years means five years to a man of my age; but Ralph was as agile and as keen as ever. 'Tis a rare thing, is youth, but 'twould trouble one to repeat it more than to forego it, one gets weary of earth living many a time, and so I said to Ralph more than once.

But just then an ample refutation came to the door in the person of a buxom woman of fifty with dyed hair and a pink ribbon about her neck. She was smiling broadly, with two good rows of false teeth to aid her, while just back of her was a youth of twenty grinning a welcome as hospitable as her own.

"Do you suppose that the son of the minister's 'leventh has departed this life and his relict has married that shambling youth?" asked Ralph.

"I should not wonder," I answered, as I looked up at the house, which had been newly painted green, with yellow trimmings and red sashes to the windows. Formerly a sign traversed the front with the honest legend,

"GRAY'S HOTEL,"

now an old creaking sign with "The Tavern" painted thereon showed that here, as other-where, it was the new fashion to be old fashioned in some matters.

It was true we soon discovered that the landlady had lost her husband—and little time in marrying again—and it was the

hostler she had wedded this time. He was full thirty years younger. Their affection seemed genuine if ludicrous, and why not, if they chose to marry? The average of their years, which must have been about thirty-five, was surely respectable. One frequently sees a man of fifty wedded to a girl of twenty; the folly is similar. I, for one, looked with toleration on the simpering woman with her dyed hair and youthful helpmate, and decided that her native wit had most likely helped her selection, for he was capable and energetic if not overburdened with wit.

They gave us breakfast, and some of their companionship afterwards, or Mrs. Fame did, her husband hovering on the outskirts, so to speak—at the barroom door—ready to dart in and help out the conversation as occasion required.

"The clock key? Oh, yes," said Mrs. Fame. "He (she invariably spoke of the youthful husband as *he*) has made a good many improvements, and last fall nothing would do but we must have the sullar cemented. Says he, 'Twill make your work so much easier.' And it has, you have no idea. The clock key was found there."

"I dug it up just under the sullar stairs," said the landlord, from the doorway.

"Did you find anything else there?" asked Ralph, suddenly.

"How did you know?" and the landlord stared stupidly, while I am afraid I followed suit.

"Any bones or anything?"

"He said there was a few, of a cat, or something," replied his wife.

"I *did* say a cat or a dog; now, didn't I, Rhody?"

"Yes, you did."

"Wall, being a female woman, I thought 'twas best not to get you stirred up."

"Then there were bones found in the cellar?" I queried.

"Yes, but I kep' it close. 'Twould hurt trade to know we found bones in the sullar."

"Why would it?" I asked, but the landlord had retreated.

"He's that close-mouthed you can't get a word out of him aidgeways," said his wife, admiringly. "I never see the beat how he's built up trade by just holding his tongue."

"Did you ever find any more writing like that your former husband gave us to read five years ago?" I asked.

"Yes, I did. It was after he died, and when *he* (emphasizing the pronoun to indicate the second husband) was tearing out a closet to put in a bigger one. It was back side of one of the panels. I kep' it to read, but I never got no time, so I put it with the other writing. You may have 'um both if you want 'um," and the obliging woman, after a few moments' absence, came back with the old note-book and a few sheets of crackling light blue, nine by ten, paper, written over closely in the cramped handwriting of the old-time landlord whose perspicuity had so interested us. Later, as we drove along our way, Ralph deciphered the manuscript. It began without date or heading of any kind, thus:

"I have had strange seizures of late. I am admonished that my end is near. Moreover, it is clear to my mind that it is my bounden duty to reveal a secret I have long kept, since the making known can hurt no one, and may serve to make amends, if amends be called for. It is held that confession is good for the soul, but why I know not, since man and his soul, or mind, or whatever the motive power of this living may be, die together and are swept back with other refuse of the past, while life rushes on as before

"Still, still why should I not tell the remainder of the story I wrote out in my journal of the murdered man? I told all and correctly as far as I told it. Not a word of it was false. But I did not tell all. I did not tell of what happened after Nancy had told of her dream of seeing Silas Horne murdered.

"It was I that did it. I arose from my bed when Nancy was sound asleep, and killed him with the knife, just as she dreamed beforehand; and then I took his bag of gold and was going to hide it when I met, face to face, at the entry door, Calvin Stearns. He was dressed and stealing in. I knew what he was coming to do, for I had seen the look of murder in his eyes the night before. 'You are too late,' I said, and then I grappled with him, for I had no mind to let him give the hue and cry.

"'Twas but a second and I eased him to the floor so that the noise of falling should not waken Nancy. The same knife I had used once before that night did the second deed. Not a drop of blood showed on the floor, for I staunched it with an old coat of my own that hung in the entry. I burnt the coat, and then, having hid the money in my strong box, I took the body to the cellar and I buried it in the soft dirt

underneath the cellar stairs. 'Twas not more than three feet deep that I dug, and I piled some bags of potatoes over the spot after I had laid down some boards, after that I always stored my year's supply of potatoes there heaped on the ground.

"As I dug his grave I said to myself that I would say he must have killed Silas Horne and then fled. He was a murderer at heart as I was in deed. There was no wrong to him, and it would be a convenient tale to tell for me. I decided to tell no lies, but just the simple truth all the way through, save and only I would not tell what I did in those hours between one and four o'clock in the morning. This I did, and to this I lay the fact that I was never charged with the deed. Nancy suspected, but she would not say, even to me, a word about it. But it was too much for her. She died of it. In her dream she saw the shoulders of the man who did the deed. They seemed always before her, and at the last she cried 'Oh, the shoulders, the shoulders,' but I held her hand and pressed it when the woman asked her, and she said that it was God's business; if she did it, He would forgive her. I never could understand about that dream of hers unless—and'tis said such things do happen—that the strong thoughts of my mind were transmitted to hers by a force I know not of. It may be so, it may be so. I was thinking the plan over, it had just come to me, strong and complete, how I would do the deed that I planned to do as I saw the pile of money, when she woke up and screamed with such dire fright. So, be it as it may, I know only that I did the deed as I planned and as she saw it done beforehand in her dream. God rest her soul! if there be a God and she have a soul. Nancy was a poor creature, but she was a good cook. I never knew a better. For myself, I die as I have lived. I have fatted off my kind as the lion does, as the stronger always lives on the weaker. And I shall die, and be buried, and become dust for the feet of future men, women and children to walk above; but I shall not care, for I shall know naught. I shall have become part of the tree, the shrub, and the sifting mold. In this way I shall have life, but in no other, no other."

*And that was all.*

"You mistrusted this?" I said to Ralph.

"Yes, and so did you."

"Not till she said the clock key had been found in the cellar, and you asked if anything else had been found with it."

"It was lost, so the narrative said, the night of the murder. There was no actual proof that Calvin Stearns did the murder. But he disappeared that night, and there was Nancy's dream and her distress of mind about the shoulders. Only the diabolical simplicity of the murderer's narrative and its absolute truth of detail stood sponsor for his innocence. Yes, I doubted him from the first, for I saw clearly that he loved money for its *own* sake; that he had the opportunity to do the deed; that he was an atheist, without the saving love of man that so many others possess; that he might have killed both men, and that Nancy was fearful of something that might be the knowledge of her husband's guilt," said Ralph. "I have thought the whole thing over a good many times since we were here."

"Do you think she awoke and knew when he did the deed?"

"No, I think she slept through it all. I think it was her dream that impressed her so strongly. She must have recognized the shoulders as those of her husband, and she may have thought the telling of her dream instigated the deed. But it did not, you perceive, for it was being planned while she dreamed it; it was his mind that impressed hers, not hers his."

"A fine nut this would be for the Society of Psychical Research to crack," I said.

And with this we drove up to another tavern and alighted under its swinging sign-board, for we had reached the village of Troy.

# THE Straying of Penelope: The Story of an Adventure.

By Margaret Westrup.

REALLY, tracing matters to their source, it was all the fault of the little calf. It is an unjust world: no one thought of punishing the little calf. Perhaps, too, the white sun-bonnet had something to do with it; but the white sun-bonnet was not punished either.

Certainly it would be at once apparent that the very small gray figure, walking so demurely on such very slim black legs to the Rectory, could not be in fault. Even if the slim legs had not been proof enough of this, the great grave eyes in the depths of the sun-bonnet must have been.

Moreover, the brown hair drawn tidily back from the wistful brow, the droop at the corners of the quiet little mouth—all went to prove that Penelope, left alone, would never have strayed from the path of duty, which in this case was the path that led to the Rectory, and Mrs. Crigby, and lessons.

A little blue butterfly flitted mischievously past the sun-bonnet, but Penelope kept steadily on her course. She was saying to herself with anxious solemnity: "Jerswee-tooay-ilay-noosom-voosate-ilsong."

She had gone to sleep the night before saying it, and when she awoke in the morning she began at once. "For," she confided to the pillow, "I are very stupid." She accepted the fact of her stupidity with the wistful resignation which was the keynote of her small existence. Mother and Mrs. Crigby said she was stupid, so of course she was.

Penelope's mother was a stepmother, and Mrs. Crigby at the Rectory taught Penelope. By these two Penelope's life was bounded at present. She walked steadily, a small gray figure crowned with a big white sun-bonnet, along the

* From Temple Bar.

sunny road that led to the Rectory and lessons. She walked in a subdued sort of way by force of habit: Penelope's step-mother was possessed of "nerves"—a mysterious word significant to Penelope of scoldings and punishments and calls for "Fielding." So, obedient to the teaching of the few years of her existence, Penelope walked softly along that road straight to temptation. She was still saying her French verb over to herself in anxious fear lest she should forget. All unwitting of the bad little calf waiting behind the hedge in the next field, she went innocently on. And just as she was passing the hedge a warm, soft, wet nose was pushed irresistibly into her hand. Penelope jumped, for the sun-bonnet hid the calf. Then she looked around.

"Oh!" she gave an ecstatic gasp of utter love, "you—dor-able."

The little calf performed an absurd whisk of long legs, and fled into the field. Penelope could feel the soft warmth of his damp nose in her hand. She looked at him with shining eyes of deep longing.

How was she to know that he was a bad little calf who had roamed away from his poor mother, and was just seeking for someone to lead into mischief?

He stood a few yards off and looked at her with alluring eyes. Penelope's heart was beating fast. She clambered through the gap in the hedge, and drew softly near, trembling with eagerness to touch him. He let her get quite close, then flung up his heels and fled a few yards further still. Penelope followed with earnest purpose.

This is where the white sun-bonnet's responsibility came in. Penelope was sideways to the Rectory, and the sun-bonnet hid the smoke from the Rectory chimneys. Now if Penelope had seen the smoke she would have remembered Mrs. Crigby and lessons. Often coming along the road, she had eyed that smoke; it was connected inseparably in her mind with the spare black figure of her austere teacher. But the sun-bonnet's huge sides hid it from the eyes within, and Penelope pursued the calf possessed with but one thought —one desire—to touch him. Her staid legs grew riotous; they twinkled and stumbled in the eagerness of their pursuit.

Her small mouth was tightly closed in determined effort. Forgotten was the French verb. Forgotten were Mrs. Crigby and lessons. In the world just then there was nobody but

the little calf and Penelope. Again and again her heart beat high with hope. Again and again the calf flung up his absurd legs and skipped off, just as the eager little hand, outstretched to the fullest straining point, was tingling with joy of the warmth that came from his thick, soft coat.

Earnestly Penelope followed over three fields. In the third the distracted lowing of a cow became discernible. With his legs at acute angles the calf stood still. Penelope drew near—nearer—eagerly she stretched out her hand. The calf gave a final high kick and raced awkwardly in the direction from whence the lowing came.

The calf's foolish mother, instead of scolding him as he deserved, hailed his frisky, unabashed approach with joy. Penelope, seeing him stop at his mother's side, had a fresh glimmering of hope. She toiled eagerly on.

But the mother chose to turn nasty. Perhaps she blamed Penelope for her son's bad behavior, some mothers being blind to the truth where their own children are concerned. Anyhow, she watched the approach of the gray-cottoned figure with a baleful glare. And when Penelope, renewed hope shining in her eyes, drew near, she put down her head and came forward in such a threatening manner that even Penelope's great longing gave place to fear, and her legs went scurrying and stumbling across the grass till they had landed their small owner safe in the next field. Then, as she paused frightened and breathless, a thin spiral of gray filmy smoke rose accusingly to the skies from the Rectory chimney—and Penelope saw it. She gave a gasp and stood staring wide-eyed and petrified. Her world came tumbling in a threatening chaos about her ears. She saw Mrs. Crigby, tall and severe, seated behind the pile of books at the head of the dining-room table—waiting. She put up her hands to her eyes and tried to shut the vision out; but it would not go. Momentarily the long lean face at the head of the table grew longer and leaner. Side by side with it Penelope saw another, a pale, peevish face whose light eyes pierced her through with their cold gleam.

Penelope's legs gave way and she sank down on the grass in overwhelming despair. The little calf never once glanced her way; he was so busy over his own concerns that he had forgotten all about her. Penelope realized his desertion with an acquiescent throb of misery. It was only in the

order of things that she should be left utterly alone in the world. She began to cry subduedly, drearily, on and on. She knew that every minute she stayed there she was making matters worse, yet she stayed. She thought night must be getting very near; she shivered all over at the thought, but she dared not go home or to the Rectory. The shadows lengthened on the grass till they enveloped the little gray heap, and in their coolness Penelope experienced acuter misery.

The cow had led her calf back to his proper place.

There was nothing to break the hushed solitude save the mournful piping of a bullfinch flitting in and out of the hedge. Perhaps if Penelope had raised her head and seen him, with his cheerful scarlet breast, he would have brought a ray of alleviation to her tear-drenched misery. But the white sunbonnet, all its stiff primness outraged, lay crushed upon the ground. Inside it wet cheeks and tragic eyes were hidden by clutching little hands. Penelope was alone, and in the uttermost depths of despair.

Meanwhile things had happened. The village fly had drawn up at the small gray house where Penelope's stepmother had lived since the death of her second husband. The fly had been followed by a queue of interested urchins and urchinesses, for in Haywold the fly was a vehicle of grandeur and importance, seldom used and much admired.

From its interior a tall girl had descended and disappeared into the gray house. Whereupon the immaculate Fielding, who cherished an incongruous affection for her mistress, had appeared to help the driver with the boxes and other traveling impedimenta. Lastly, the driver had emerged, smiling at a coin he held in the palm of his hand. He had mounted to his seat and driven away. The urchins and urchinesses had dispersed slowly.

Inside the gray house the young lady, who was Mrs. Hardy's sister, stood looking down on the sofa in the shaded, scented room, where Penelope's stepmother lay assiduously smelling at a silver vinaigrette.

"Sorry I startled you," the girl was saying in a pleasant, brisk sort of voice, "it's over two years since I've seen you."

"Yes, I am so easily startled now." The voice came in sharp contrast to that other; it was thin and slow and decidedly peevish.

"Worse?" asked the girl.

"Oh, yes," with what sounded strangely like enjoyment, "oh, much worse, Helen! My nerves——"

"Shall I go? Do you want to be alone?"

"How unkind you are. When I get so little company——"

"Oh, all right. How's the baby?"

"Penelope? Nothing's ever wrong with her."

"Where is she?"

"At the Rectory, I suppose. She racks my poor nerves with her noise. So I send her to the Rectory all the morning and afternoon. Mrs. Crigby is glad to earn a little money. The Rector spends everything on musty books full of microbes."

Helen was pulling off her gloves.

"What does she do there?" she asked.

"Who? Penelope? Lessons, of course."

"Poor mite!"

"How absurd you are, Helen," the light greenish eyes on the sofa looked with a cold sort of fire upon her. Helen remembered with a whimsical smile her terror at that look when she was much younger. She wondered suddenly if Penelope were affected by it.

There was a pause. Helen's thoughts wandered; their wandering brought a softness to her eyes.

"You know I'm engaged?" she said.

"Yes; to Sir Ralph Bennington," the name rolled lingeringly from her tongue; "it is a very good marriage for you, Helen."

Helen frowned. She rose and walked to the window.

"When is it to be?" asked her sister.

"I don't know. I haven't decided yet."

"It ought to be soon; I see nothing to prevent it, and much to render it advisable. You are homeless, now that Mrs. Willoughby has her cousin to travel with her."

A curious look shone in Helen's gray eyes for a moment.

"I can get another post as companion," she said quietly.

"But how ridiculous it would be. And I cannot offer you a home here, Helen. If you will stay a few weeks I shall be pleased. But I am so poor; my bad health is so expensive——"

Helen's eyes swept the crowded room; the vases of flowers; the scent bottles; the fans; the screens and cushions and yellow-backed novels.

"Yes," she said.

"Does Sir Ralph hold back?" asked her sister.

A gleam of mirth lit the frank face over by the window.

"No; he wants me to marry him now—at once."

"Then why——"

"Oh, I don't know," Helen shrugged her shoulders slightly, her short upper lip curled wilfully. "I won't be hurried," she said; "he's too masterful."

Upon the peevish remonstrances of Mrs. Hardy broke the immaculate Fielding.

"Please, ma'am, it's after five and Miss Penelope has not returned. She didn't come home to dinner, neither."

Fielding spoke in hushed tones that reminded Helen irresistibly of a death chamber.

"Really, Fielding, I do not see why I should be troubled. She is at the Rectory——"

"Does Miss Penelope always return to dinner?" broke in Helen's voice.

"Yes, miss——"

"Then why wasn't your mistress told that she had not returned to-day?"

"I didn't want to trouble her, miss. I never vex her with little things; and I knew Miss Penelope would be quite safe at the Rectory."

There was a hint of defiance in Fielding's hushed tones.

"She is quite right," murmured her mistress, feebly, "my nerves will not stand——"

A thought had struck Helen.

"Does she return alone?" she said.

"I do wish you would not speak so abruptly, Helen. Fielding, my lavender salts."

Fielding handed the bottle to her mistress and answered Helen.

"I can't be spared to take and fetch her, miss, nor cook neither."

"She is perfectly safe," moaned Mrs. Hardy, "all this is so upsetting——"

"Some one must go to the rectory at once," said Helen.

"Fielding must not go," the peevish voice grew energetic, "it's nearly time for my egg in milk, and I am hot. You must fan me, Fielding."

"Yes, ma'am. And cook can't go yet, because she's just

cutting the bread for your buttered toast, and you don't fancy anyone else's toast——"

Helen walked to the door.

"I will go," she said, and went.

When she returned Fielding met her in the hall. "Oh, miss, you mustn't go to the boodoor, mistress is terribly upset——"

"Hasn't Miss Penelope been heard of yet? She hasn't been to——"

"Oh, yes, miss. Mr. Parker, the farmer, brought her back soon after you'd started. And mistress is that upset over her naughtiness——"

"What has she been doing?"

"Hiding and playing truant, and didn't want to come home, and mistress——"

"Where is she now?"

"She's locked into the box-room, miss, for a punishment."

A vast pity for the small prisoner swept over Helen's soul.

She looked round the darkening hall, and through her mind flashed those words of Charles Lamb anent his childhood: "I was dreadfully alive to nervous terrors. The night time, solitude, and the dark were my hell."

She turned to Fielding. "Give me the key, please."

"Mistress said——"

Helen turned to the boudoir.

"I will ask your mistress——"

"No, no, miss! She's quieted down, now," Fielding held out the key in an agitated hand.

Helen took it and swept up the stairs.

She knew she might be disquieting herself vainly, but the mere idea of a child's suffering terror hurt her. She had been a nervous child herself.

When she opened the door of the box-room silence and dim shadows greeted her. She peered round the room, which was filled with boxes and trunks and rubbish. She recognized with a thrill the ghostly possibilities of the place to a nervous prisoner.

"Penelope," her charming voice rang out clear and comforting.

Over in a corner she descried a bundle that looked despairingly human. She made her way swiftly to the corner and bent over the bundle.

"Darling." She touched the little figure, and a scream of terror echoed amongst the empty boxes.

Helen saw that Penelope was lying huddled up, face hidden against the floor, and both ears covered tight with agonized hands. Quickly and with a firm touch Helen pulled the hands away.

She felt a long shiver pass through the little body, but no more screams rang out. "Penelope, I am Aunt Helen. Darling, don't you remember me?" She held her close to her warm heart, "Aunt Helen, dear."

Slowly the figure in her arms relaxed. In a trembling whisper Penelope muttered, "They will get you too—you too——"

"We'll come downstairs now," Helen said cheerfully.

A pair of arms clung round her neck with stifling fervor.

"Will you lock the door?" Penelope whispered, "there are such a lot of them—oh, do lock the door!"

"Yes, dear," answered Helen, soothingly, "but it's only bad dreams, sweetheart."

She turned the key with reassuring creaks in the lock, and they went downstairs. Helen's gray eyes were blazing.

"Did you have your tea, darling?" she asked briskly, as they entered the dining-room.

"There was the one with the light green eyes," whispered Penelope, "and he was ever so long, and he crept along round the boxes——"

"Penelope," Helen's voice was very firm, "he was a bad dream, they were all bad dreams; none of them were real. You must not talk about them. I shall be vexed with you if you do."

Penelope's arms tightened. "Oh, no! Oh, *no!*"

"Very well. Now tell me did you have a good tea?"

Penelope shook her head.

"Why not?"

"I—I was too bad to have tea."

"What did you have for dinner?"

The arms clung. "I was—on the grass."

"Do you mean that you have had no dinner?"

"Yes."

For a moment Helen's lips shut in a straight line. Then she said gently, "Will you stay here a minute, dear? I want to get you something nice and hot to eat."

Penelope's short life had been one of obedience. She struggled valiantly and loosened her arms. When Helen saw the small white face for the first time in the light, her upper lip quivered, and she caught Penelope to her again.

Penelope's courage gave way; her arms clung round Helen's neck. "Please—oh, please," she whispered, "I don't want anything to eat—*ever*."

"We will ring for cook," said Helen tenderly.

When the cook came she quailed under the gray eyes and made voluble excuses. Helen cut her short.

"Where is her dinner?"

"Cook did so 'ate waste, and that Fielding 'ad such a big appetite you wouldn't believe, and nat'rally they thought when Miss Peniloppy didn't come 'ome as 'ow she were dining at the Rectory."

"You mean you have eaten it. What have you in the house?"

It appeared that there was mistress's beef tea for that night and for to-morrow.

"Make half of it hot *at once* for Miss Penelope."

Cook looked scared at that. She began a feeble remonstrance, but "I will take all blame," said Helen; and cook bustled away in a sudden hurry of sympathy for Penelope now that all responsibility was removed from her shoulders.

Helen sat down with Penelope on her knee, and kissed the soft little neck and cheeks and hair. Helen was rarely demonstrative, but there was an ache in her heart for her small niece.

Penelope said politely, "Thank you, Aunt Helen," and looked up at her with heavy, dazed eyes.

"Don't, child!" Helen's voice was sharp.

Penelope of course misunderstood. "I—am sorry," she said.

It was a formula she was continually called upon to use without understanding why.

Helen's brows contracted. She kissed her gently, and began to talk to her pleasantly on cheerful subjects. She doubted if Penelope followed what she said, but she achieved her object of making the atmosphere less electric and charged with invisible horrors.

When cook brought in the tray she set it down on the table with a beaming air of self-approval. "There, dearie, all strong and 'ot, and two pieces of toast with it!"

"Thank you, cook," Penelope said politely, but she did not want the food. However, she took it obediently, and when she had begun, liked it. When it was finished Helen put her arms round her close and warm. "Now tell me all about it, dear," she said.

And Penelope, her usual staid self-restraint swept away in a mighty whirlwind of emotions, poured it all out in a torrent of sob-broken words. It was a queer jumble of pathos and humor, of tragedy and comedy, but to Penelope it was all tragedy. It was not only of that day she told; unknowingly she told of other days too. With the utter abandon of a sensitive nature meeting with an unexpected wealth of sudden love and sympathy, she poured out all without reservation. Many expressions shone in Helen's eyes as she listened. The little calf brought a pitiful smile to them, and they were often filled with sorrow; but there was anger too, deep anger, and scorn and disgust and wonder.

But when the breathless, broken voice ceased there was only love. Penelope lay exhausted in her arms, and a feeling of restful happiness stole over her. "Aunt Helen," she said earnestly, "you are heaps comfortabler than a bed."

Two minutes later Helen laid the small sleeping figure down on the sofa, covered it with a rug, and sought her sister.

Five minutes later still a bell was pealing wildly from the boudoir, and Mrs. Hardy was calling feebly for Fielding and *sal volatile*. Helen, her head held high, her face pale, passed Fielding on the threshold.

A good deal can be said in five minutes.

She went back to the dining-room. Penelope had vanished under the rug.

"Penelope!"

At her voice the scared face and roughened hair emerged. Penelope flushed, "I—I thought just a minute I was in the box-room"—her eyes looked up appealingly into Helen's face.

"Never again, dear," Helen said firmly, "I am going to take you away with me——"

She was interrupted by a sudden surprising disappearance of the sedateness she had thought part and parcel of her small niece. Penelope flung herself upon her with a choking cry, "With *you*—with *you?*"

"Yes, dear, for always," said Helen gently.

"To—to *live?*" Penelope's voice was beyond her control, it shrilled out in quavering excitement. But habit was strong; she looked round anxiously, "I—didn't *mean* to make such a noise," she said apologetically.

"When you are with me, Penelope, you shall make as much noise as you like," said Helen recklessly.

Helen never did things by halves. It was one of her attributes that Sir Ralph Bennington dearly loved.

Penelope gasped. Then her arms squeezed Helen's throat spasmodically. "I—I'll sweep your room," she burst out, the eagerness of her longing to give something in return almost choking her voice. "I'll dig up the weeds! I'll do your dresses what do up at the back! I'll—I'll—" her imagination failed her, she halted.

Helen kissed her. "You'll just play and play and play!" she said.

"Oh!"

Penelope had an imagination. The wonders which the idea of unlimited play and noise called up held her silent for awhile.

Helen went to a side table and found note paper and ink.

"P'raps," said Penelope nervously, "p'raps you don't know I are very stupid;" a scarlet flush crept over her small face.

"No," said Helen, "I don't believe it. Never mind if you are."

Penelope drew a big breath. Almost as she drew it she was overcome with sleep.

Then Helen hurried to the kitchen. "When does the last post go?" she asked.

"Seven twenty, miss, from the orfice."

Helen glanced at the clock on the mantelpiece. Five minutes past seven. She ran back to the dining-room and dashed off a note.

No time to write. Can you come down to talk things over? I have a condition I want to tell you of. . . . . I'm afraid you'll hate it. If, when I have explained all about it to you, you agree to it, I will marry you at once.

Yours,

*Helen.*

She addressed it, and then putting on her hat as she went, took it to the post-office herself. She caught the last post with a minute and a half to spare.

That night Penelope slept in a warm bed close beside Helen.

And the little calf who had been the cause of it all slept in a warm barn close beside his mother. Perhaps, after all, he ought not to have been punished. For if he had not enticed Penelope from the path of duty—but then we are told that we must not do evil that good may come. Maybe, though, the laws are different in calf-land. Anyhow the little calf was not punished, so let it rest at that.

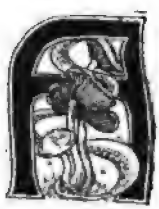
The next morning Haywold was electrified by the arrival of a telegram from London. Helen received it at half-past ten o'clock. The time when it was handed in at the London post-office was eight forty-five. Sir Ralph Bennington had received Helen's letter at half-past eight precisely.

Helen did not often do foolish things, but when she read that telegram she bowed her head and rested her lips for a moment upon the signature written some ten minutes previously with great care by the dapper young man in the Haywold post-office.

The telegram ran thus:—

To Miss Graham, The Laurels, Haywold.

I agree. Am catching 9.2 from Paddington. Due at Haywold 11.5. *Ralph.*



# N Adventure in St. Vincent: A Tale of the 18th Century, by Sir William Laird Clowes*

TOWARDS the end of 1795, Victor Hugues, who as Commissary of the Convention and Governor of Guadeloupe, made desperate efforts to rehabilitate the declining influence of France in the West Indies, was bent upon the conquest of the island of Saint Vincent. All his regular forces, however, were fully engaged elsewhere. He was able to depend only upon the native Caribs, who occupied the greater part of the island, and, with few exceptions, were in a state of disaffection, if not of open revolt against the British, and upon a motley crowd of ill-disciplined adventurers whom he collected with difficulty, and who, when at length they were disembarked on the island, were defeated with comparative ease. It is true that several months later he was a little more successful, though he was able to hold part of the island only for a very brief period; but I am concerned now with his first, and not with his second effort. Hugues's first effort landed Monsieur Moreau de Jonnès in one of the most astonishing and romantic adventures of the latter's exciting career.

Moreau de Jonnès had already acquired some knowledge of Saint Vincent, having lived there with the Caribs for several weeks, and having attached to himself a chief named Pakiri. This chief had a daughter, Eliama, whom de Jonnès, who was only eighteen when he knew her, describes as a miracle at once of beauty, of intelligence, and of heroism. She had received her education at a convent at Saint Pierre,

*From the Cornhill Magazine.

Martinique, and was in consequence a determined enemy of the British. She also was eighteen in 1795.

The two young people made one another's acquaintance under dramatic conditions. De Jonnès, with a commission from Victor Hugues as a lieutenant in the Artillerie de la Marine, was at Saint Vincent in charge of a dozen French artillerymen and a couple of small guns, his mission being to organize, arm and drill the Caribs, and to reconnoitre and report concerning the positions held by the British garrison, the headquarters of which were at Kingstown. De Jonnès was Pakiri's honored guest; but Eliama was absent from the island, having gone to Martinique to nurse a friend who had been bitten by a snake. Monsieur Léon Say, who knew de Jonnès, and who has commented upon the adventure which I narrate, does not appear to entertain the slightest doubt as to the truth of any part of it. For reasons which I shall presently set forth, I have no doubt whatsoever as to the falsity of certain details; but I ought to explain at once that in saying this I do not necessarily attack the good faith of de Jonnès. The assertions which I am able to controvert purport to be nothing more than reproductions of statements made to him. He does not put them forward on his own authority; and I am bound to admit that I cannot disprove any part of the present story that pretends to be the record of the writer's own knowledge and experience. De Jonnès, however, on this as well as on other occasions, shows an ungenerous readiness to believe any and every evil concerning the British; and I cannot acquit him of having accepted and disseminated an abominable libel which very little inquiry and research would have shown him was absolutely baseless. On September 4, 1795, a hurricane, accompanied by earthquakes and volcanic rumblings, burst over Saint Vincent. De Jonnès and some of his Carib friends were on the west side of the island, and were watching the sea. Suddenly they caught sight of a large vessel which looked like a frigate, and which was evidently endeavoring to weather the north point of the island. They supposed that she was trying to get round to Kingstown, probably with the object of carrying supplies to the British garrison there. It looked as if she might be successful, when without apparent reason she swung round to windward, was taken aback, and broached to, her masts coming down instantly. She was but two

cables from the rocks at the time, and within a few seconds she drove ashore and struck violently, the huge seas sweeping her decks, and presently lifting her up and dashing her down again with such force that the bottom must have been knocked out of her almost immediately.

The onlookers were clinging to the rocks and the low shrubs, and, the air being full of flying objects, they were themselves in some danger. Nor could they distinguish much. But just before the fall of the masts de Jonnès had imagined that he saw two dark figures in the mizzen shrouds. He then lost sight of them altogether. A moment later, however, an artilleryman, who was more favorably situated, discovered two black heads rising and falling amid the waves, and pointed them out to Pakiri, who instantly recognized one of them as being that of his daughter, whom he supposed to be still in Martinique. All the Caribs swam like seals. The old chief leapt into the boiling water to save the girl or to perish with her, and, after a terrible struggle, succeeded in steering her round the end of a projecting point under the lee of which there was some small amount of shelter. Thither the natives rushed to assist, and at length Pakiri and Eliama were enabled to reach the shore. Eliama's story, as told on the following day, and as repeated by de Jonnès, was as follows:

She had left Martinique in a native canoe, accompanied by a single Carib attendant. In the channel between Saint Lucia and Saint Vincent the little craft had been sighted by a British frigate, the Laurier, which had chased and overhauled the canoe, and ordered its occupants to come on board. On reaching the deck, Eliama had ascertained that the vessel was commanded by "Lord Seymour," and had been told that he desired to see her in his cabin. She had declined to go thither, whereupon the captain had come out and attempted to drag her in. She had resisted, and had struck the captain in the face, drawing blood, and knocking him across a gun. Rising, he had again approached her in a threatening manner, and had only desisted upon finding that the girl had provided herself with one of the poisoned arrows which are still used by the Caribs of the mainland, and that she was prepared to use it. She had then been allowed to retire to a place on the poop, where she had crouched on deck after the manner of the Caribs. The captain, upon

being summoned in consequence of the dangerous situation of his ship when the hurricane burst upon her, had found the girl there, and had kicked her as he passed. This last outrage had decided her, and, awaiting the critical moment, she had seized an axe and severed the tiller-rope, which seems to have been exposed. She had thus brought about the loss of the frigate and of the greater part of her crew, including the brutal captain. The rest, upon gaining the shore, would have been murdered by the Caribs had not de Jonnès informed the savages that Victor Hugues would make a handsome return in spirits or gunpowder for every prisoner delivered alive to him. Three days later the survivors were sent to Guadeloupe.

Now for the refutation of this disgraceful tale. I cannot go so far as to say that no British vessel of any kind was wrecked on the shores of Saint Vincent in September, 1795. A merchant vessel of some sort may have been, but certainly not a frigate, nor any regular British man-of-war, large or small. The records are all perfect. Nor was there then in the British navy any ship named the Laurier. Even supposing Laurier to be de Jonnès's version of the British ship-name Laurel we are equally at fault. There was no British man-of-war so called in the West Indies that year. Of British naval officers bearing the illustrious name of Seymour and of rank sufficient to entitle them to command a frigate, even temporarily, there were in 1795 three only, if I except one, Phineas Seymour, who, being then seventy-six years of age, had retired from active service, though he lived till 1803. These three were Lord Hugh Seymour, better known during his early life as the Hon. Hugh Seymour Conway; Michael Seymour, the elder of that name; and Stephen Seymour. Lord Hugh had been promoted to the rank of rear-admiral three months before the date assigned to the alleged loss of the Laurier, and was then in the Channel Fleet. Michael Seymour, who had been only three weeks a commander, and who was not regularly eligible for a post-ship like a frigate, commanded the Racehorse, a sloop; and he was not in the West Indies. Stephen Seymour, who likewise was not regularly qualified for a post-ship, yet who might conceivably have commanded one in an acting capacity, was elsewhere, and was lost in June, 1796, in the Arab off the coast of France. If, therefore, no Laurier or Laurel,

nor any other British frigate was lost off Saint Vincent in 1795, and if no British naval commander named Seymour commanded a vessel named Laurier or Laurel, nor lost his life in 1795, we may, I think, conclude that the story of the ill-treatment of Eliama by a British officer rests on very flimsy foundations indeed.

The truth of the narrative of the subsequent adventures of de Jonnès in Saint Vincent is, I hope, less questionable. The Frenchman spent the following three months with the Caribs, and devoted part of that time to training them, and part to making a military map of the island, or rather the northern part of it. Eighteenth-century maps divide the island into two portions by means of a line running from near Black Point, on the east, to the mouth of the Willibou, on the west. The district south of this line, including the modern townships of Kingstown, Château Belair, and Calliaqua, was, in 1795, British; the district to the north, including the Soufrière and Morne Caru peaks, and the modern Georgetown is marked as "Caribs' Land," and was occupied almost exclusively by the natives, most of whom had French sympathies. The mountainous frontier was well guarded on the Carib side, not only by watchmen, but also by a number of trained dogs, somewhat like greyhounds, of Spanish breed and of savage habits. Eliama could manage these animals without difficulty, but de Jonnès never felt safe with them, and seems to have been in permanent terror lest they should mistake him for an Englishmen. No doubt the British, on their side, took their precautions also.

The delay in the arrival of forces from Guadeloupe permitted the English garrison at the south end of the island to perfect its defenses. Kingstown was covered by an entrenched camp, and further protected by means of fortified lines connected with the citadel, which was an old house, dominated, it is true, by neighboring hills, but owing to the height and strength of its walls, safe from any *coup de main*. At last Hugues sent over a battalion of infantry, and at the same time a dozen privateers disembarked part of their crews to assist in the forthcoming attack; but de Jonnès remarked with misgiving that the so-called soldiers consisted largely of military offenders from the colonial depots, seamen who had deserted their ships, negroes, wild Caribs, and even armed women and girls. The wild natives, he says

bitterly, were, nevertheless, the best disciplined people in that scratch army, and the least inclined of any to pillage, incendiarism, and devastation. They were more obedient than the soldiers, less ferocious than the negroes, and not so drunken as the seamen.

It was arranged that the army, such as it was, should move round by the coast, and that de Jonnès, with his handful of artillerymen, his two guns, and a body of friendly Saint Vincent Caribs, should march across the mountains direct, so as to turn the British position, and post the pieces advantageously on the high ground behind the town. The first part of the scheme succeeded capitally. De Jonnès crossed the forest-clad hills, meeting with but little resistance, descended towards the coast, took up his assigned position and opened fire at short range upon the entrenched camp; while the other column, which had arrived by way of the coast, stormed the British outworks over the fascines with which the Caribs had half-filled the ditches. Indeed, all the works had been taken, if we may trust the account, and most of their defenders cut to pieces, and the invaders had it open to them to enter the citadel and the town with the flying remnant of the British, when indiscipline turned what had been an incipient victory into an utter defeat. The people got out of hand, and halted to indulge in pillage and to raid a rum factory. More than half the army was presently drunk, hundreds of men lying about perfectly incapable of movement; and not until the factory and its contents had been burnt was it found possible to arrest the evil. Thus the actual occupation of the town was delayed, nor could it afterwards be effected. A British corvette lying in the port had put to sea at the beginning of the attack, and, after her departure, the privateer vessels from Guadeloupe had anchored there. In the early morning of the next day, just as the French were about to advance again, the corvette returned. The privateer captains on shore with the army saw their vessels endangered, and remembered that they had but few people on board. There was, therefore, a general rush of the privateersmen back to their ships. The result was a panic. De Jonnès says that if only the British had made a sortie at that moment they might have carried all before them. To cover the withdrawal which became necessary the houses in the suburbs were set fire to, and,

sheltered by the flames and smoke, the rest of the coast column retired.

In the mean time de Jonnès, as he fondly supposed, had been doing exceedingly well with his two guns, which he had moved on to the crest of a narrow and lofty spur jutting out from the mountainous mass in the centre of the island. But the spectacle of the sack of the rum factory had been too much for the majority of his people, and the Caribs among them had at length joined their comrades below, leaving only the few French artillerymen above with their lieutenant. When the retreat began, and still more, when the British began to follow it up and to harass its rear, de Jonnès saw that the time had come for him to look to his own safety, unless he preferred to be cut off and taken. He began, therefore, to withdraw towards the mountain heights, but was soon obliged to abandon one of his guns, which he threw over a precipice.

While he was engaged in this task he was accosted by another young Carib girl whose acquaintance he had made, and who, armed like a man, sprang down to him with the news that his retreat had been cut off by a body of negroes in the British service. In fact, even as she spoke, some of the enemy showed themselves. Not an instant was to be lost. The girl seized de Jonnès by the arm, and flung both him and herself from the edge of a cliff on which both happened to be standing. The two fugitives crashed down together through the thick vegetation which covered the slope, and, while the bullets of the negroes whistled over them, plunged deeper and deeper into the overgrown but nearly precipitous gulf below them. De Jonnès believes that in this mad succession of leaps, struggles and rushes, they descended in a few minutes more than six hundred feet. Creepers and other thickly matted plants broke their numerous falls and saved them from serious damage, and at length they tumbled out upon a level spot, breathless, but, save for pricks and scratches, unhurt.

The young lieutenant's deliverer was one Illehuē-Arabou, or Flower of the Woods, a granddaughter of a reputed sorceress, from whose clutches de Jonnès some time before had saved a British officer, one Captain Dawson.

The two found themselves in a deep and narrow ravine. It was dry, but there were ample signs that, after rainfall

on the higher ground, it became, at least for a brief period, the bed of a roaring torrent. While they were debating what next to do, they were suddenly threatened with a new danger. The negroes from whom they had just escaped did not attempt to follow them down the almost perpendicular declivity, but, unfortunately, another body of negroes appeared on the other side of the ravine, which was somewhat less steep. The first body hailed the second, bidding it to look out for the fugitives below; and the second, having found a path, began to scramble down. De Jonnès and his companion feared to descend the bed of the ravine lest they should fall into the hands of the British, who were again masters of the coast to the south of the island; and they feared equally to ascend it lest they should find themselves unable to escape at the upper end of it. Nor could they hope to make any effectual resistance to the twenty or thirty well-armed negroes who were upon their tracks. The pursuers, sure of their quarry, were already shouting news of their success to their comrades above.

It was then that Illehuë-Arabou bethought herself of the proximity of the mouth of a wonderful cavern, of which she knew something. This cavern, according to de Jonnès, was in reality the lower part of a deep and gigantic fissure which ran through the mass of the mountainous centre of the island. While marching southward with his guns he had crossed the top of this fissure, which was there no broader than an ordinary field ditch, though he had been told by the Caribs that a two-hundred-fathom line would not reach its bottom. It was also said to run for at least a league and a half through the rock. The natives were obviously superstitious concerning it, and when Flower of the Woods spoke of it she displayed extreme reluctance to enter it, declaring that no one who had gone in thither had ever come out again. The danger, however, was pressing, and the fugitives, taking refuge in the dark mouth of the mysterious opening, posted themselves, musket in hand so as to command the passage. They had not long to wait, for the negroes, though they hesitated to invade the cavern, soon showed themselves at the orifice, and began to fire at hazard into the gloom, where they did no damage. De Jonnès and Flower of the Woods, on the other hand, were thus provided by their enemies with excellent targets, and succeeded in

shooting one or two of the assailants, the rest of whom drew off with shouts of savage rage. They remained outside, but under shelter, and seemed to be concerting plans of attack until it began to grow dark. De Jonnès quickly realized that although his position gave him an immense advantage so long as daylight lasted, it would put him at a disadvantage at night, when his foes, superior in number, would be able to approach him without being seen. Indeed, night had scarcely come on ere Flower of the Woods, who had been recounting in a whisper some of the eerie legends connected with the place, interrupted herself, and struck out suddenly and vigorously with an axe which she had in her hand. She had seen the glitter of a human eye, and a piercing yell, followed by the fall of a heavy body, showed that she had struck none too soon.

It was clearly time to move from the vestibule of the cave, and to seek safety in its narrower and less accessible depths. De Jonnès and his companion, therefore, withdrew into the fissure, the unknown recesses of which offered them a retreat into which it was most unlikely that they would be followed for any great distance, all negroes having a horror of such places. They could still hear their enemies, who appeared to have received reinforcements, and to be engaged in blocking up the entrance. After a long period of suspense it became plain that something far worse was in view. A red glow grew out of the darkness, a tongue of flame and smoke leapt upwards, and it was seen that the pursuers had collected a huge mass of inflammable material at the mouth of the cavern, and had set fire to it. When the bonfire was well alight the negroes flung into it bundle after bundle of green stavewood (*Sterculia fœtida*), which presently poured forth such dense clouds of suffocating and nauseating smoke that the position became at once untenable. The coughs of the fugitives, as they retreated further in, were saluted from outside with bursts of delighted laughter. Unfortunately, there was an inward draught, and the pungent smoke followed de Jonnès and the girl, and even outstripped them for a time as they stumbled over rocks and boulders in their frantic search for respirable air.

The Frenchman had heard terrible stories of the grim and tireless determination of the blacks in the pursuit of vengeance. He had read of negroes who, in order to poison an

enemy, had worked steadily at their project for as much as twenty years. He knew, therefore, that he could not hope to return by the way he had come, and he determined to endeavor to find some other exit. Flower of the Woods told him that the cavern was popularly supposed to run right through the mountains into Caribs' Land, although she did not affect to believe that it could be traversed. It was grasping perhaps at a straw, but he decided to proceed, and with some difficulty he induced the girl to accompany him, assuring her that, since the negroes had not frightened her, she was not likely to be frightened by anything which she would encounter in the recesses of the earth. They embraced one another, he says, like a pair of lovers who give rein to their affection, feeling that death is before them, and then they pushed on.

I am sorry to say that Monsieur Moreau de Jonnès, in the course of his career, embraced a good many young women, red, black, and white, with an amount of effusion which can hardly be excused. In Saint Vincent alone he seems, by his own admissions, to have been on kissing terms not only with Flower of the Woods, but also with her sister, Oualou-Couma, or Star of the Morning; with Eliama, the chief's daughter, and with Zami, a little slave. From the openness with which he records these frequent divagations, I conclude that when he wrote he did not contemplate that the story of his adventures would ever fall into the hands of a future Madame de Jonnès. For the sake of domestic peace, I hope that it never did; but I may add, on behalf of the impulsive and sentimental Frenchman, that his love affairs seem to have been very harmless, and to have inflicted no permanent damage either upon himself or upon his many-colored divinities.

Progress was most arduous. Along the greater part of the passage the way was so narrow that one had to follow the other; and in very many places the sides approached one another so closely that it was hard to squeeze between them even sideways. When, on the other hand, the walls receded and formed long chambers of some breadth, it was difficult to avoid losing the way. The wanderers could not easily tell in what direction the prolongation of the fissure was to be sought for, nor could they readily make certain of not straying into some network of side caverns, and so getting hopelessly lost.

As for the path itself, it was dangerous in the extreme, being strewn with detached blocks of lava, so that it was necessary for the fugitives to feel the way with the butts of their muskets at each step. Sometimes the road made a sudden downward dip, as if it would lead beneath the level of the sea, or into the very heart of the volcano. The shells which he had found among the mud deposits of old eruptions had convinced de Jonnès that communication existed between the smouldering furnaces of the Soufrière and the sea, and he felt that he might be getting unpleasantly near the focus of the volcano. At other times the track ran up against the base of a long and steep slope, very hard to scale and then led them to such heights that it seemed as if they must eventually reach the top of the fissure, and emerge into the open air. But alike at the highest and at the lowest points the wanderers still found themselves closely imprisoned between two walls. Once only, at an immense and incalculable altitude above them, they saw a bluish patch, and presently a glimpse of the moon reminded them that it was still night. That brief glimpse of the exterior world was the only one they had while they were in the cavern; and, far from cheering them, it impressed them with an almost hopeless sense of the depth at which they were buried, and of the distance which separated them from other human beings.

Flower of the Woods, having so long escaped the malicious machinations of the supernatural powers which she had expected to encounter in the cave, had plucked up her courage and taken the lead. She made a much better guide than de Jonnès, her senses in the darkness being all more keen than his; yet she halted continually to listen apprehensively to far-off rollings, rumblings, whistlings and splashings, some of which seemed to be occasioned by slight disturbances in the body of the mountain, others by the escape of volcanic gases, and others by the movement of subterranean streams of water. All this inspired de Jonnès with increasing fear lest they might find the way barred by some lake or river which they would be unable to cross, or fall in with foul gas which would still more effectually put an end to their progress. Fatigue and anxiety at length exhausted them both beyond endurance; and, as if by common accord, they sat down on a drift of sand. In a minute the girl dropped her head upon his knees and went to sleep; and de Jonnès, almost ere he had

realized that he was too weary to move further, was sleeping also.

They awoke refreshed in mind as well as in body, and resumed their advance; nor had they gone far before it became apparent that the way was growing easier. The fissure broadened so that they could move forward side by side, and the path was more level and less obstructed. At last Flower of the Woods declared that she could hear the waves breaking on the coast, though de Jonnès, even when he concentrated his attention, could distinguish nothing. She also saw signs of daylight long ere he could detect any diminution of the darkness of the cavern. Presently, to their unutterable joy, they reached the open air again, and saw, framed with the arch of the entrance, the luxuriant landscape spreading below them. In the very mouth of the cave, however, was a stony basin, about forty feet broad, filled with water which seemed to be in a state of ebullition, while on the surface rested a heavy vapor. Fortunately the water was not really boiling. The bubbles bursting through it were caused by cold gases. The real danger in crossing lay in the vapor. As soon as he approached its level de Jonnès experienced its effects, and was seized with violent sneezing and a convulsive cough. Seeing that instant and desperate measures were necessary, he ordered Flower of the Woods to hold her breath, and dragged her in. The water was shallow, and swimming was not needed; but in the middle of the pool the girl forgot her companion's injunction, the result being that she lost consciousness, and was saved only by the most exhausting efforts on the part of de Jonnès. He felt himself so weakened and helpless that, caring no longer, perhaps, whether he fell into the hands of friend or foe, he primed his musket and discharged it, in order to attract attention, and then sank fainting by the side of Illehuë-Arabou.

Tended by Caribs, who quickly arrived, Flower of the Woods soon recovered; but de Jonnès had to be carried up to the cabin of Pakiri and Eliama, and some time elapsed ere he was himself again. His musket shot had been heard by some of the people who were returning from the attack on Kingstown. The Caribs, full of superstition, would not have approached the sulphurous pool had not the example been set them by the soldiers and seamen who accompanied

them; so that, but for the fortuitous passing of the detachment at that moment, de Jonnès and the girl might have perished, even when safety was in sight.

De Jonnès returned soon afterwards to Guadeloupe, and was then employed by Victor Hugues to play in Martinique much the same part as he had played with such unsatisfactory results in Saint Vincent. His business was to stir up the natives and negroes against the British, who had captured the island in 1794, to organize a rising, and to acquire information. He was taken prisoner, but being speedily exchanged, and having rejoined Victor Hugues, he was once more allowed to go to Saint Vincent. He found everything changed. The British had assumed the offensive, and both Pakiri and Eliama had fallen. The French and the remnant of the warrior Caribs had been driven to their last stronghold, where de Jonnès joined them. Most of the non-fighting native population had been transported in the meantime to the island of Ruatan. The French and their friends made a good defence, but at length were obliged to surrender to Sir Ralph Abercromby. De Jonnès, who had been wounded by the explosion of a powder magazine, became again a prisoner to the British, and was promptly sent to France on board a cartel.

Since 1795 the unfortunate island of Saint Vincent has undergone so many terrible experiences that, no doubt, its physical configuration has altered greatly from what it then was. I have never met anyone who pretended to be able to identify the long cavernous fissure in which de Jonnès and Flower of the Woods spent so many hours: yet, at least until just before the last fatal eruption of the Soufrière, the volcanic mass which constitutes the island was seamed to an almost incredible extent with unexplored cracks, caves and geological faults, and it may well be that the vast cavern of de Jonnès was in his day exactly as he described it.

# THE Wooing of Nellye: The Tale of a Courtship, by Una Hudson. Illustrations by Marie Latasa*

AT THE age of six she wore a pink sunbonnet and made mud pies. I called her "Nellie," and I ran many tiresome errands and chopped much knotty wood into neat little lengths for kindling that I might earn pennies whereby to keep her supplied with taffy-on-a-stick, and large, shiny sticks of black licorice, dainties she particularly affected.

* Written for Short Stories.

She accepted my saccharine offerings graciously, so graciously, indeed, that at the ripe age of ten years I ventured to make my first proposal. "Nellie," I said, "when we grow up will you marry me?"

And she responded promptly. "If I don't find anyone I like better I will."

Being young and inexperienced, I was blissfully content with her answer, and for two cents I secured a large brass ring, set with a brilliant red stone—my later experience with precious stones has convinced me that it must have been merely a piece of glass, but it was none the less beautiful in our eyes—which I presented to her as a pledge of my affection. It was entirely too large for her small finger, but that, I assured her, was a defect which time would remedy. "And," I added, "I won't have to buy you another when we grow up, for this one is so large you can't possibly outgrow it," and, in truth, I think she never could.

She was sweetly acquiescent, and wore the ring suspended from her neck by one of my shoe strings, which I gave her for the purpose.

And I stood very straight and swelled with pride, and felt myself almost a man.

At the age of sixteen she became athletic and sternly practical. She wore stiff, mannish collars, severe sailor hats and common-sense shoes. She talked slang and answered to the name of "Nell."

But at twenty I was her devoted slave, even as I had been at ten, and I played tennis—which I detested—and I took long walks—which I abhorred—just as I would have done any other absurd thing that she might see fit to command.

But her second answer to a certain momentous question was less reassuring than the first had been.

"If you were not such a kid," she said, "and if you had a decent name I might have you, but fancy having to call one's husband 'Percy.' Makes me think of a nice little Fauntleroy boy with long curls and lace collars."

Whereupon I defended my name with some unnecessary warmth, for that name has always been a thorn in my flesh. And as for being a "kid"—I reminded her that time would work wonders in the matter of one's age, and anyway I was older than she was.

"And," I added, "if you don't like me you had better give me back my ring."

Then she became indignant, and asked with withering scorn if I really thought she was such a simpleton as to have kept that old brass ring all these years. She hadn't seen the horrid thing for a perfect age, and she did wish I wouldn't always be spoiling our good times by trying to make love to her.

So I swallowed my chagrin and disappointment as best I might and drew what comfort I could from the fact that she had not as yet found any one she "liked better."

At eighteen she affected trained gowns and picture hats, and I was more in love with her than ever. She developed hitherto unsuspected romantic tendencies, and wrote me charming little notes which she signed "Nellye."

And then, just as I began to think that at last my protracted courtship might be brought to a speedy and happy termination, Nellye's father announced quite suddenly, and for no tangible reason whatever, that he was "tired of having that young Randolph always hanging around the place," and he ordered that my intercourse with his daughter should cease forthwith.

Nellye wept and I expostulated, but it was all in vain, and I was forced to bid her a sorrowful farewell, and that, too, in her father's presence.

Then it was that the dear girl managed to send me a sweet little note which sent my heart leaping for joy, for she said

that while she did not wish to disobey Papa, yet because I was such a very old friend she really did not see the harm in occasionally meeting me accidentally. And I promptly saw to it that our "accidental" meetings were many and frequent.

Had we confined ourselves to surreptitious matinees and "chance" encounters in a certain restaurant "when Nellye took her lunch down town" sandwiched between shopping in the morning and calls in the afternoon, our interviews might have continued undetected until the end of time.

But Nellye's back yard offered most alluring possibilities, and we tempted Fate to our undoing. For Nellye's father, declaring that he "wanted room to breathe," had bought a house set in such extensive grounds that unconscious strangers were often found strolling over the smooth lawns or eating lunch in the shade of the trees, they having mistaken the place for a public park.

Nellye herself was wont to complain of the unfashionable isolation of her home, her only neighbors, as she pathetically explained, being some people who also wanted "room," not to breathe but to raise chickens, and Nellye detested chickens.

Nellye's father, however, took a deep interest in things rural, and dignified Judge Carroll in earnest argument with a stumpy person of German extraction concerning the relative merits of Plymouth Rock and Brahma roosters was a sight for gods and men.

When Nellye evinced a sudden interest in poultry, and began to talk learnedly of "pullets" and "cockerels," I was somewhat at a loss to account for her sudden change of front. But she explained to me that she frequently walked down to the end of her back yard to watch the baby chicks "next door" eat their supper.

"Just at dusk," she told me impressively, and she added that if I was interested in chickens and should happen along about that time she didn't see any harm in talking to me over the back fence.

I shuddered at the awful prospect of being discovered by Judge Carroll, hanging over the back fence in earnest conversation with his daughter, quite after the manner of Bridget and her best young man, but Nellye, who is a most original young woman, pointed out that the surest way to hide what

you are doing is to do it quite openly, and she mentioned the famous diplomat, name unknown, who concealed an exceedingly important document by displaying it on his mantel. I rather think she invented the yarn about the diplomat, but that is a mere detail of no importance whatever.

Being resourceful as well as original, Nellye suggested that I might pass through the alley disguised as a ragman or as a collector of garbage if I were *afraid* of being discovered. This last in a tone of delicately-veiled scorn, which made me promptly determine to come in my own proper person, and to come soon, which I accordingly did.

The plan worked charmingly—for a time. So little did we fear detection that one luckless evening, Fate and Nellye tempting me, though in truth I fell an easy victim, I boldly entered the yard. Previously I had always remained on the safe side of the fence—the outside; and with Nellye alert to give timely warning of the approach of any member of the family, I felt reasonably secure.

But this particular evening I intended, for the third time, to offer Nellye my heart and hand, and incidentally my not inconsiderable fortune; and who could successfully propose to a girl over an intervening five-foot fence?

"Nellye," I said, by way of leading up to the subject nearest my heart with all possible delicacy, "Nellye, I am getting tired of meeting you this way, always clandestinely."

"It's very romantic," Nellye murmured from behind the big bunch of roses she held in her hand.

"And after a while," I went on sternly practical, "it will be winter and we can't stand around in the snow talking over a back fence."

"There will be other places," Nellye suggested, airily.

"Nellye," I said, going straight to the root of the matter; "if I can get your father's consent, will you marry me?"

Nellye flashed me a most bewitching smile. "You can't get his consent," she temporized.

"Then," I counselled boldly, "marry me without it, and we will get his forgiveness afterwards."

"Percy," Nellye said softly, and her cheeks grew suddenly pink, "Percy, do you remember a ring you gave me, oh, a long time ago when we were quite little? I found it yesterday and it just fits my finger. I'll wear it if you like"

And then, before I could answer her—almost before I could entirely understand all that her words implied—Nellye gave a little scream, and following the direction of her terrified gaze I saw through the intervening bushes her father coming straight toward us.

"Run, Percy, run," Nellye gasped. "He hasn't seen you yet."

I cleared the fence at a bound—it was a leap of which no athlete need have been ashamed—and I found myself among a lot of frightened, squawking chickens. For in my haste I had lost my bearings and had escaped into the German's chicken-yard, and not into the alley as I intended.

I cast a wild look backward, and I saw the Judge's dignified saunter change into an ungainly lope. He brandished his cane and shouted at the top of his voice, "Otto, Otto, some one is stealing your chickens."

And then that addle-pated German rushed out of his house and executed a war dance all the way from his back door to the chicken-yard.

"Mein Gott," he howled, "mein schickens; oh, mein schickens!"

And then there arose a perfect babel of noises, for the German's wife ran out and cried shrilly for the police, and the chickens cackled, and Nellye wrung her hands and laughed and cried hysterically, and the Judge from his side of the fence shouted directions for my capture.

"De tief," roared the German, "he vill egscape, he vill egscape."

But escape I could not, for on one side the German barred the way, and on the other the Judge. And while in a hand-to-hand encounter I could easily have overcome either one of them, yet I dared not risk a scuffle, since at close quarters I must inevitably be recognized. So I pulled my hat well over my eyes, and hoped that in the deepening twilight I might escape identification.

And now the Judge rose to the occasion in a way that sent cold chills all over me.

"Nellye," he commanded, "run up to the house and telephone for the patrol wagon."

Nellye sent a frightened look in my direction, and, unseen by her father, I signed to her to do as he had asked, for it seemed to me better to be run in as an unidentified chicken-stealer than to confess who I was and why I was there.

And I reflected grimly that, but for the dash of low comedy as supplied by the German and the chickens, the situation was surely romantic enough to satisfy even Nellye's perverted taste.

Had I been the hero of an historical romance, to bind and gag, or otherwise dispose of the driver of the patrol wagon and the burly policeman, whose prisoner I was, and successfully make my escape, would have been the merest trifle, not worth mentioning. But not being possessed of the inestimable adventages of those favorites of fiction, I was compelled to let matters take their course, with the result that

I spent the night in the "bull pen" with a "drunk" and a "vag," and my own not altogether agreeable meditations.

The "drunk," a most delapidated specimen of humanity, slumbered peacefully and audibly. The "vag," a person of equally unprepossessing exterior, was inclined to be friendly and inquisitive.

"Guess you never been here afore," he ventured, after a prolonged scrutiny that took in every detail of my personal appearance.

I admitted that his surmise was entirely correct.

"What they jug you fer?"

"Chicken stealing," I answered, briefly.

His mouth fell open in astonishment. "Wot yer giving us?" he indignantly demanded.

"Gospel truth," I assured him, cheerfully.

"One of them—them—them guys wot steals things 'cause they can't help it?" he ventured, doubtfully.

"You mean a kleptomaniac?" I suggested.

"That's it. Be you one?"

I assured him that I was not; thereupon his interest in me subsided for a time.

"You'll be tried afore Jedge Carroll," he remarked, after a pause.

"Great Scott," I ejaculated so explosively that the "drunk" opened one eye and surveyed me with maudlin ill-humor. "S—should be s—'shamed to 'sturb a gemman's s—sleep," he muttered, and lapsed again into unconsciousness.

"Jedge Carroll," the "vag" repeated impressively, evidently proud of the impression he was creating.

"Jedge Wilbur Carroll. An' he's a hard judge. He'll give yer all the law allows."

And I rather thought he would, and some besides, for Judge Carroll, I had heard, was somewhat autocratic in his rulings.

And now my last loop-hole of escape was closed, for I had decided to make a clean breast of the whole business to the judge before whom I was to be tried, whoever he might be. But that that judge could by any conceivable possibility be Nellye's father had never for one instant entered into my calculations.

And whether to plead guilty to stealing chickens and trust to his mercy as a judge, when it was well known he hadn't

any, or to confess to clandestine meetings with his daughter, and appeal to him as a man who had once been young and in love, but had very evidently forgotten all about it, I could not determine.

Altogether I passed an exceedingly uncomfortable night, and when, quite early in the morning, I was summoned from the "bull pen" I was ready to welcome any change that promised a diversion.

I was conducted to a room that, meagerly furnished as it was, was yet a great improvement over the "bull pen," and there I found waiting for me the last man I wanted to see—Judge Carroll.

I gave him as jaunty and cordial a greeting as circumstances permitted, but he waived it solemnly aside.

"Of course," he said, "I recognized you last night, but out of consideration for my daughter I preferred not to divulge the secret of your identity."

He paused, evidently expecting me to express my deep gratitude for his consideration, but my feelings being quite the reverse of grateful I remained discreetly silent.

"Chicken stealing," the Judge continued, "is a very low and vulgar crime."

"What's the penalty?" I asked, sulkily.

"Ordinarily thirty days in the county jail, but I think I can manage to send you to the penitentiary for a year."

"I haven't a doubt of it," I rejoined with considerable asperity.

The Judge very properly ignored the interruption.

"Stripes worn cross-wise," he said, impressively, "will not be becoming to you." For the Judge knew that I was inclined to be fastidious about my dress.

"I like 'em worn cross-wise," I retorted, defiantly. "The garb you allude to has much to recommend it. It is er—unconventional, and er—I should imagine very easy and comfortable."

For a fleeting second an appreciative twinkle showed in the Judge's eye, but he sternly repressed it.

"Of course, Percy," he said, "I know you were not stealing chickens last night, but appearances are against you, and I can send you up if I choose."

"You can," I agreed savagely, "and you probably will."

"Not necessarily." The Judge had assumed his most judicial manner.

"If you will give me your word of honor, Percy—for you are a gentleman, and a gentleman's promise may be relied upon—not to again seek an interview with my daughter, I will see that this charge of chicken stealing is not brought against you. But if, on the other hand, you refuse me this promise, it will become my duty, my very painful duty, to place you where you will be unable to interfere with my plans for my daughter. She will soon forget you, and inside of a year I will have her safely married to some one else."

And then the worm turned. For I assured the Judge in language more forceful than elegant that I would see him in a place not mentioned in polite society before I would give him any such promise; and I furthermore announced my fixed intention to plead guilty to whatever absurd charge might be brought against me, and when I should be set at liberty my very first act would be to marry his daughter, for I loved Nellye and Nellye loved me, and he should have an ex-convict for a son-in-law if he wished.

And then, my fireworks and rhetoric being exhausted, I folded my arms and waited for the Judge to pour forth the vials of his wrath.

But it seemed that he hadn't any, for he patted me on the back with great cordiality and shook my hand till it ached.

"You are a man after my own heart," he declared, "and I always intended you to marry Nellye."

But I stared at him in stupid amazement, being quite unable to comprehend so sudden and astonishing a change of front.

"Er—what—why didn't you say so before?" I managed to gasp. But the Judge, having the benefit of years of experience in attempting to solve that most puzzling of all eigmas—woman—smiled pityingly at my ignorance.

"You are very young yet, my boy," he said, "but Nellye will be a liberal education for you. She confessed to me last night that she positively could not live without you, 'and wouldn't I please go and get you out of that horrid place' for she loved you, oh, so much'—and so I came," the Judge finished complacently.

"This morning," I interjected dryly.

The Judge laughed his great, hearty laugh. "Bless the boy, you surely didn't expect me to come all the way down here last night!" he said.

"Well, anyway," I said, a trifle sulkily, for the memory of my night in the "bull pen" was fresh upon me, "I think you might have taken me into your confidence as to your intentions concerning Nellye and me."

"Wouldn't have done at all," objected the Judge. "Nellye is sharp as tacks. She would have had it out of you in no time—and then she would have run off with some other fellow."

"Oh," I said, comprehensively, and the Judge smiled kindly.

"You will learn in time," he said. "And now run along to Nellye, for I have got to go and open Court."

And the Judge went to his court and I to my sweetheart.

# COUSIN Mathieu: The Tale of a Legacy, by Charles Deslys. Adapted from the French by Lawrence B. Fletcher*

ANATOLE ROUSSELOT was not a bad fellow, on the whole. His most conspicuous vice was that very common one, an inordinate love of money. And Fate, which had made him, at twenty-five, a stock-broker's clerk, seemed resolved to encourage his avaricious bent. Most of his friends were of the same way of thinking, but there was one shining exception—Prosper Desroches, a young painter, who preferred art in a garret to all that money can buy.

One day, when the two friends were disputing, as they often did, about the value of riches, Anatole received a letter advising him that Mathieu Rousselot, a distant cousin, was dead and had left his whole estate, worth a good many thousands a year, to Anatole.

Mathieu had long lived in retirement on one of his farms near Cherbourg, and thither Anatole at once proceeded, taking his friend the artist with him. At Cherbourg they found awaiting them an old and very rustic carriage, drawn by two immense farm horses, which were munching some hay strewn on the pavement. The driver was a grizzled old farmer with a keen glance and a shrewd smile.

"Heavens! Is *that* Cousin Mathieu's carriage?" Anatole exclaimed.

"That's what it is, monsieur, and we'd better be off at once; for we have three good leagues of bad road before us."

As they drove along the coast the artist was loud in admiration of the country and the view, but Anatole continued to sneer at everything, especially the equipage.

*Adapted for Short Stories.

This was too much for the old coachman, who presently turned and said:

"Monsieur, I have lived with your cousin Mathieu, man and boy, for more than sixty years, and I owe it to his memory to tell you that it would grieve him very much to hear your ungrateful words—begging your pardon, Monsieur. This carriage is not in the latest fashion and the horses are not thoroughbreds, but it is just by saving such things that your cousin got together the property that he has left to you."

Anatole, though surprised by the man's impertinence, calmly asked:

"What post did you fill with my cousin, my good man?"

"A post hard to name in one word. Half manager, half servant—and wholly friend."

"You must have known him pretty well. Tell me—Oh, by the way, what is your name?"

"Jean."

"Nothing else?"

"You may call me Monsieur Jean, if it isn't too much trouble," said the old man, drily.

"Well, *Monsieur* Jean, what sort of man was this cousin Mathieu?"

"*Ah, mon Dieu!* just a simple, ordinary sort of a man like myself—begging your pardon. But he was better educated than I am and knew more of the world, for he lived in Paris once, and burned his fingers there like so many others, so they tell me. But he had sense enough to get out in time and go to farming, and with God's help he made out so well that he died richer than his father, after all.

"But in his old age, when he had only to fold his arms and enjoy life, he began to feel lonely and regret that he had never married. He thought of sending for some of his heirs to cheer his old age with a little merriment and affection, but he was taken ill suddenly and could show his friendship for you only by his will. It is a great pity, for you would have liked him, I am sure."

"I have not a doubt of it," Anatole replied, with great condecension.

"Monsieur Jean," exclaimed the artist in his usual impulsive manner, "can't you find a Cousin Mathieu for me? I am an orphan and I need one badly."

"I can't think of one at this moment," said the old man, as he turned into the farm gate, "but who knows what may happen?"

The carriage stopped before an old château, which had been transformed into the most charmingly picturesque farmhouse in all Normandy.

"What a hovel!" said Anatole.

"A paradise," cried Prosper.

They found dinner awaiting them, and the practical Anatole, who had been narrowly examining the house and furniture, was pleased to see that the silver was solid and heavy.

After dinner Anatole began examining the papers of the deceased, while the artist made a tour of the farm, accompanied by Monsieur Jean. The old man was inquisitive as well as garrulous, and wormed out of Prosper not only the meagre incidents of his life but his sentiments and artistic difficulties, struggles and disillusions.

"Ah! if Monsieur Anatole were like you!" the old man exclaimed.

When they returned Anatole asked:

"Where can I find a notary?"

"At Cherbourg, Maitre Goudois, through whom your cousin purchased all his properties, including this one—Les Ormettes."

"Very well. He will be the best one to sell it."

"Sell Les Ormettes?"

The old man's tone expressed mingled indignation, sorrow and disgust.

"Do you suppose I am going to keep a property that pays barely two and a half per cent.?"

"Two and a half per cent!" M. Jean retorted hotly. "Do you count as nothing the security of a home, the pleasure of cultivating your own fields and seeing them covered with flowers, grain and fruit? And the satisfaction of doing your duty, which is to preserve this house as your cousin Mathieu left it, and carry on his charities which have made the name of Rousselot revered for miles around? These things seem to me to double the income."

"No doubt," sneered Anatole, "but things of that sort are not listed on the Stock Exchange."

At sunrise next morning the artist installed himself in front of the house with a small canvas, crayon and brushes

and began to sketch the picturesque old structure. He had been at work an hour, and was completely absorbed in his task when he was startled by a low cry of surprise, and turning, saw M. Jean looking over his shoulder.

"Do you know that you have remarkable talent?" the old man asked.

"I try to do my best," Prosper replied, modestly. "But when a fellow has to paint for his living—" He paused.

"I understand," said M. Jean. "To do your best you need independence."

"In other words, three thousand francs a year."

"But your pictures ought to sell well, and with economy—"

"Economy in Paris, and without a fixed position? No. If I knew that I had a dinner awaiting me; if I could live as I wished, in the country—"

"If you could buy Les Ormettes, for example."

"Exactly; but I cannot, nor shall I, in all probability, ever be able to."

"Who can predict the future?" said M. Jean. "Especially the future of an artist."

At this moment Bastien, the farm servant, appeared, out of breath and very much excited.

"More trouble!" he exclaimed. "Here comes Mlle. Irène. I just saw the convent carriage coming up the hill."

"Irène!"

For a moment M. Jean seemed embarrassed. Then turning to Prosper, he said:

"Let me explain, and at the same time ask a favor. This Mlle. Irène is the late proprietor's cousin, and was left an orphan in her fifth year. M. Rousselot kept her here for a few years, and then sent her to the Ursuline Sisters in Cherbourg. She always came over to see him once a fortnight. They were very fond of each other. She is now—let me see she must be about nineteen."

"How did it happen that your employer left her nothing?" Prosper interrupted impulsively. Again M. Jean showed symptoms of embarrassment.

After a little hesitation he replied: "I must tell you everything, I see. The will which makes your friend sole heir was never intended to operate except under certain conditions. M. Rousselot expected to invite your friend here and arrange a marriage between him and Mlle. Irène. But

M. Rousselot died suddenly and that spoiled all. I have not yet had courage to tell Irène that he is dead. Will you do so?"

The painter reluctantly accepted the commission.

"Thank you," said M. Jean. "I will inform your friend of my master's real intentions, and I have no doubt that he will be honorable enough to fulfill them—especially after he has met Mlle. Irène."

M. Jean was scarcely gone when the young lady appeared. She was tall and slender, very graceful and remarkably pretty. She stopped in some confusion on seeing Prosper, who bowed and said:

"I have been commissioned to receive you, Mademoiselle."

"You! But who are you, Monsieur?"

By an instinct of genius Prosper pointed to his picture.

"Oh, did you do that?" the girl exclaimed. "How beautiful!" The introduction sufficed for the nonce, and they entered the house together. Prosper found the situation peculiarly embarrassing. He talked rapidly and vaguely, trying to force himself to his unpleasant task. Irène appeared surprised by his loquacity, as well she might be. Presently she said:

"Excuse me, Monsieur, but I am impatient to see my cousin Mathieu, so I must—"

"You will never see him again on earth," said Prosper. "His body rests in the village graveyard, and his soul is with the saints."

This rather brutal revelation rendered Irène incapable of speech for some minutes. Prosper, as he looked at the weeping girl, at first reproached himself for his want of tact, and then, saying to himself that it was best to have it all over at once, informed her that she was left penniless.

"What do I care?" sobbed Irène, indignantly. "It was not his money that I loved. He has been a father to me. Oh, Cousin Mathieu!" and she gave way to another fit of weeping.

Prosper felt his own eyes growing moist, and was greatly relieved when Anatole appeared.

The new proprietor wore the black coat and white cravat of ceremonial mourning, and had a big portfolio under his arm. He was evidently going to see his notary. If M. Jean had spoken to him the interview had been fruitless, for

Anatole walked straight to Mlle. Irène with the firm tread of a man whose determination is fixed, and said in a patronizing tone:

"I sympathize with your grief, Mademoiselle, and I understand your position. Although the will is very correctly drawn"—he laid stress on these words—"you may be assured that I will do everything in my power. I will continue to pay for your board and tuition at the convent."

"I thank you, monsieur," Irène replied, with dignity. "But there is no charge at the convent except for pupils. I left this morning as a pupil, but I shall return as a novice, so I shall need nothing."

On hearing this Prosper felt deeply grieved, though he could not have told why to save his life. As for Anatole, a smile of satisfaction, which he quickly suppressed, flashed over his face.

"I am very sorry that I can do nothing for you," he said.

"But you can do something," Irène exclaimed. "Will you be good enough to give me Cousin Mathieu's portrait—the one which hangs in the turret chamber? It is not a great work of art, but it is an excellent likeness. It has a fine gilt frame. I don't want that, only the picture."

Anatole summoned Bastien and bade him fetch the portrait. For a moment Bastien seemed stupefied by this simple order. Then he laughed loudly and disappeared.

"Don't forget the carriage," Anatole called out after him "I must start for Cherbourg at once."

"Here is the portrait," said Bastien, suddenly reappearing with a canvas which he displayed before him as if he were a living easel.

"Ah! Dear, good Cousin Mathieu!" cried Irène.

The two young men looked at the picture, then at each other. You have got the wrong picture, my man," said Anatole. "This cannot be Cousin Mathieu."

"Of course not," said Prosper, "It is M. Jean."

There was a sound of laughter from the concealed Bastien.

"Did any one call me?" asked a mocking voice, and M. Jean appeared in the doorway.

With a cry of surprise and wild joy Irène sprang toward him and threw herself into his arms.

"Yes," said M. Jean, "I am the late Cousin Mathieu—who begs his darling's pardon for having put her affection to so cruel a test."

"What does all this mean?" Anatole asked.

"It means, Monsieur Anatole, that before leaving you my fortune—and this most precious of my treasures—I wished to assure myself with my own eyes that you were worthy of them, and I could think of no better test than this well-worn comedy trick. If the issue has proved unfavorable to you, you have only yourself to blame."

"But, my dear cousin——"

"Do not be concerned about the expenses of the war. Here are 10,000 francs as indemnity, for your loss of time and the injury to your feelings."

"Monsieur——"

"There is a train at noon, and the carriage is waiting. I will not detain you further."

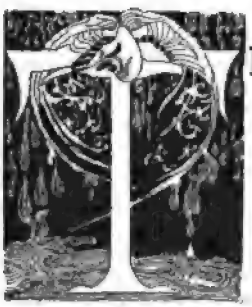
Then turning to the artist, Cousin Mathieu added:

"You, Mousieur, will give *us* much pleasure by remaining a few days."

Prosper hesitated. He feared to offend his friend, but Anatole himself decided him to remain by whispering: "You are my only hope of reconciliation with Cousin Mathieu."

When the "few days" had stretched to six months Anatole received the following letter:

"My dear friend: Irène and I are to be married next week. Now, do not cry 'Treason!' for it is an express condition of the marriage that you are to inherit at least half of Cousin Mathieu's fortune. But I hope and believe that he will keep us all waiting many years, for the late Rousselot is quite cured of his fondness for dying. PROSPER."



# THE Passing of a Profit: The Story of a Losing Venture, by Henry Louis Mencken*

OF COURSE there are Eminent Authorities who declare that a really successsul betting system has never been and never will be invented, and that the chances at rouge-et-noir, faro, roulette and trente-et-quarante will always remain four to three in favor of the bank; but a moment's thought will recall the fact that there were once, also, Eminent Authorities who maintained—and proved—that the earth was hexagonal, that iron ships would sink the moment they were launched, and that colds in the head might be cured—and caused—by witchcraft. The Eminent Authorities last named are dead now, and it is hard to find their graves, but those of the first class cited are yet numerous and enthusiastic, and because the mathematical doctrine of probabilities, which is a mighty and mysterious thing, is their main weapon, they are certain at all times of select and attentive audiences.

Nevertheless, a certain James R. Sarding, aided and abetted by one T. George Dixon, once proved them to be hopelessly wrong. The proving was performed upon the directors and stockholders of the Casino at San Mateo, and more particularly upon the Señor Enrique de Vegas, manager thereof, and although in the end the profit of Messrs. Sarding and Dixon was inconsiderable, the system which they employed operated perfectly.

Sarding obtained the secret of it from a Norwegian coal passer at Aden, who told wonderful lies and had a marvel-

*Written for Short Stories.

ous liking for Scotch whiskey. The whiskey, which served as fuel for the lies, was purchased by Sarding, and as he watched it disappear into the Norwegian's cavernous mouth, he listened. The story of the system is one of the things he heard.

For a year or more he tested it in private, under all conceivable conditions. At first it seemed to render the chances of the bettor no more than even, but after awhile Sarding discovered a manner of improving it by playing at roulette upon combinations of the red and the number three, and thereafter the chances of the bettor arose from even to five to four, and then to seven to five, and to thirteen to seven.

When the last stage was reached Sarding abandoned a plan which he had for selling condemned ships to the Haytien navy, and took passage from Baltimore, on the tramp steamer Toltec, for San Mateo, which is a town on the Mexican coast and the home of the San Mateo Casino, or American Monte Carlo. Sarding had heard of San Mateo as a favorite resort for American lambs and Mexican wolves. The former were in the habit of visiting the town during the winter, ostensibly for the benefits to be derived from the soft, tropical climate, but in reality for the benefit of the aforesaid wolves. Though the Casino was a small, one-horse affair, and there was little big play, quite a few valuable American dollars had settled at San Mateo, and Sarding, being an American and patriotic, was desirous of repatriating them.

As the Toltec passed the Chesapeake capes, outward bound, Sarding made the acquaintance of Dixon, a tall, thin, beardless young man, who wore ridiculous "pince-nez" and seemed to be suffering from a great depression of spirits. Dixon said that his father had put him aboard the Toltec while he (Dixon, Jr.) was in a state of alcoholic coma, and that he intended to travel in the West Indies until the three $100 banknotes in his inside pocket—which his relative had kindly provided—were gone. He ventured the further statement that he was "the family black sheep, or tribal skeleton," and that this was his fourth involuntary trip from home, and made several quotations from the works of Rudyard Kipling to illustrate his story.

Him Sarding at once hailed as a valuable ally—first, because of his money, and secondly, because of his general make-up and characteristics. On the third day out an agreement was signed whereby the two engaged to pool their funds and

their possible profits; on the fifth day Dixon was taught the method of operating the system, and on the sixth day the pair landed at San Mateo and engaged quarters at the Hotel d'Europe. The next morning they were introduced to the Señor de Vegas, manager of the Casino, as Americans of wealth and leisure, by the Señor Juan Gonzalez, proprietor of the hotel.

"Eet ees unfortunate, " said the Señor de Vegas, "zat ze señors come not een ze season. Now zere ees not mooch American zshentlemen in ze ceety."

"Tut, tut!" said Dixon and Sarding, and then the trio walked along the veranda of the hotel until it met the veranda of the San Mateo Casino, which was next door, and there the Americans stopped a moment to admire the gaudy tropical scenery and to light their after-breakfast cigars. Far below was the glimmering, shimmering gulf — a sea of diamonds and emeralds, and on the steep hillside, from the very gates of the Casino to the water's edge, were dense thickets of short sturdy palms and brilliant crotons. On the landward side of the Casino was a huge cocoanut "walk" that reached up the hill, up, up, a waving riot of green, to the summit. On the giant slope from the beach to the crest the Casino and the hotel perched like a double chimney on a steep roof. Dixon and Sarding gazed for awhile in silence and admiration.

Then the Señor de Vegas discovered four distinguished friends—Don Jose Cabarello, a member of the cabinet of his excellency, the President of the Republic; Don Juan de Gato, a member of the Nationel Railways Commission; the Señor Enrique de la Gastos y Bianca, governor of the city of Tampico, and Count Léon Osterville, of the Belgian nobility. Dixon recognized the count as one of the gentlemen who sat upon a pile of bagging at the dock and watched the Toltec unload, and the Señor Gastos y Bianca strangely resembled the man who sold clay images in the Plaza des Dames, down the hill in the town. But for the present the count was undoubtedly the Count Léon Osterville, a nobleman in search of amusement, and the Señor Gastos y Bianca was plainly the governor of the splendid city of Tampico, and the other gentlemen were exactly what they were, and so Dixon and Sarding said nothing, and the roulette wheel began to spin and the game was on.

The Señor de Vegas was extremely sorry that the official croupiers—all of them—were off duty. There was but one—in fact, not away from San Mateo on vacation—for it was not the season—and this one, unfortunately, had broken his leg the night before. Perhaps the señors would wait until he recovered, or perhaps—would they permit the Señor de Vegas himself to play croupier? It would be a lark, a jolly lark—and incidentally—this the Señor de Vegas thought without speaking—it would be safer. Dealers were dumb dogs and Americanos were crafty. It would be safer, certainly—and oh! it would be such a lark! The managing director of the Casino in the croupier's seat! Dixon and Sarding laughed heartily. Also, they winked at each other when the Señor de Vegas and his friends were not looking their way.

"You honor us," said Dixon.

"I am honored," said Señor de Vegas.

And so the game began, and for two days and one night the wheel spun and spun, and Messrs. Dixon and Sarding staked their money upon combinations of the red and the number three. Late in the afternoon of the second day the Señor de Vegas grew haggard and careworn, and his friends, the count, the dons and the señor swore softly in Mexican-Castilian. The pile of dollars between Messrs. Dixon and Sarding was growing.

As the sun went down and the hill behind the Casino grew scarlet and crimson, the Señor de Vegas pushed a little pile of gold toward Sarding and dropped a tear upon the spot beside him whereon it had rested.

"Ze game moost stop," he whispered sadly. "Ze bank eez bo'st."

"Gentlemen," said Sarding, rising and calmly bowing to the Castilians, "my friend Mr. Dixon and myself must bid you good afternoon."

And with all of the available cash assets of the Casino at San Mateo in two bulky shot bags, Messrs. Dixon and Sarding walked along the veranda to the hotel, twice stopping to admire the reflection of the dying day in the shimmering blue-green of the sea far below them. Back in the main saloon of the Casino the Señor de Vegas was weeping, and his friends, the count, the señor and the two dons, were comforting him.

"Swine!" said the count.

"Swine!" said the two dons.

"Ruined!" said the Señor de Vegas.

And in their room in the hotel the swine laughed and made merry, for the system, despite the Eminent Authorities and the mathematical doctrine of probabilities, had been a success. The bank of the Casino at San Mateo, the American Monte Carlo, was broken.

Twice before dinner Messrs. Dixon and Sarding counted their winnings. There were, in all, three throusand four hundred and fifty dollars, in silver, gold and paper—a vast heap of rubbish which nearly filled Dixon's dress-suit case. Safely encased in that receptacle the spoils were depocited. in the middle of the floor of their room, and inasmuch as the next steamer away from San Mateo would not leave for six days, and there was not a trustworthy bank or safe-deposit vault within five-days' journey by land, they considered the matter of mounting guard. Finally they determined to stand watches of eight hours alternately, and after they had finished their meal and had drunk, in honor of their success, a quart of champagne apiece, they cast lots and Dixon won the first rest. And herein, by a decree of that goddess of chance who had watched over them at the Casino, ill fortune took good fortune's place upon their trail.

While Dixon snored Sarding thought of the money in the dress-suit case, and then he thought of the fact that the secret of the system had been his originally, and that he was entitled to the entire credit for the plan of breaking the bank. Then he meditated upon the circumstance that Dixon, who had done nothing but furnish two-thirds of the capital and play the assistant in the game, would receive a full half of it, and that this was unjust. After awhile he decided that the injustice should be rectified. Why should he not seize the entire winnings and run away with them? A moment's thought showed him that to do this would be both impossible and crude. Then he thought of other plans, and by and by he came to the conclusion that the most artistic method of securing Dixon's share of the money would be to win it from him.

Accordingly next morning, during the latter part of Dixon's first watch, Sarding proposed that they kill time by playing poker. In half an hour Dixon's share had been reduced

to $550. Then, suddenly, Dixon threw down his cards and grabbed those in Sarding's hand. Dixon had two aces, Sarding had three more, and Dixon, without a moment's hesitation, struck him a clean, straight blow between the eyes.

After that, for a minute or two, loud sounds proceeded from the room of the Americanos, and there were sundry dull thuds and heavy bumps, and above all, a loud obligato of yells and profanity. Down stairs, on the veranda of the hotel, the Señor de Vegas was discussing ways and means with the Señor Gonzalez, proprietor of the hostelry, and Count Léon Osterville, and the other señor and the two dons. The Señor Gonzalez left the group and dashed upstairs and into the Americanos' room. Dixon was in the act of delivering a second clean, straight blow between Sarding's eyes.

"In ze name of ze law!" exclaimed the Señor Gonzalez, appearing before them.

Dixon and Sarding loosed their fierce embrace and stared at him.

"What do you want?" demanded Dixon.

"I have ze duty to make ze arrest of you," replied the señor smilingly. The Señor de Vegas, the count, the other señor and the two dons appeared in sight behind him.

"For what?" asked Dixon.

"For ze fiendish assault upon ze Señor Sardeeng."

"Away with you," exclaimed Sarding. "*A bas* your law! I refuse to prosecute!"

"Ah," replied Señor Gonzalez, "zen I have ze honair of making ze arrest of ze Señor Sardeeng, also."

"For what?"

"Because he interfere wis ze punishmen' of ze Señor Deexon."

"And who are you?" demanded Dixon, advancing toward the Señor.

"I am ze maître of ze hotel," answered the señor, grandly, "and also I am ze prefect of ze police."

A second later, in falling down the stairs backward, the Señor Gonzalez collided with the Señor de Vegas, the Count Léon, the other señor and the two dons, and after they had picked him up and soothed him, he took counsel with them. Upstairs in their room Dixon and Sarding took counsel also, and their first decision was that it would be wise to lock

their money in the dress-suit case and prepare for eventualities. Ten minutes later, when the Señor Gonzalez returned, accompanied by a file of *rurales*, and ordered them to surrender, they bolted the door and laughed at him. Then, while he made a speech ordering them, upon pain of shooting, to surrender within ten minutes, Dixon noiselessly dropped out of the window in the back of the room to the garden beneath it, and Sarding dropped the treasure to him and followed it. By the time their absence was discovered Messrs. Dixon and Sarding were safely fortified in a little adobe cocoanut warehouse in the middle of a clearing on the hillside behind the hotel and the Casino.

Just at this moment a half-breed rushed around to the front of the hotel and revealed the Americanos' whereabouts to the Señor de Vegas, and without delay the file of *rurales* proceeded to the cocoanut warehouse and surrounded it. As the Señor Gonzalez, maître d'hôtel and prefect, hove into sight, Messrs. Dixon and Sarding were preparing a rampart of cocoanuts within the closed doors of the warehouse. As he approached the door and bade them surrender, Dixon fired at him with Sarding's pistol, and the Señor Gonzalez, when the bullet whizzed near his head, ducked and fled.

Then began a siege, and the Señor Gonzalez summoned up his forces, and Dixon and Sarding, within the cocoanut warehouse, built them a fort and set out to beat off their besiegers. When the latter, after a long speech by the Señor Gonzalez, attempted to rush the fort, Dixon opened fire on them, and one of the most valiant soldiers—to wit, Count Léon Osterville, who appeared in the guise of a sergeant of *rurales*—received a bullet through the lobe of the ear. Howling and scared, he beat a hasty retreat, and his fellow warriors followed him.

Thereupon, seeing that brute force was of no avail, and being in fear of colliding with a bullet himself, the Señor Gonzalez bethought him of a stratagem. He would combat the Americanos with fire. He would smoke them out. He would defeat them, and their defeat would be inglorious.

So a half-breed was told off to sneak up to the warehouse from the rear and to set up a pile of brush-wood against the wall. For ten minutes he tip-toed back and forth with armfuls of dried banana fans and cocoanut husks and other tinder-like rubbish. While Dixon and Sarding, within, watched

the door of the warehouse nervously, in expectation of another rush, the pile of fuel grew behind them and unknown to them, and suddenly it burst into flame. Then Dixon and Sarding smiled grimly and waited in patience for the rise of the curtain upon the next act. The melodrama was becoming interesting.

Outside the flames crackled and roared, and the forces of the Señor Gonzalez drew nearer, but Messrs. Dixon and Sarding, as yet, did not fear, for the wall of the warehouse was of adobé and the roof was of galvanized iron, and so it wouldn't burn, and the smoke that curled through the eaves was inconsiderable. A long while would be required to smoke them out, they thought, and in a long while many plans could be devised and many accidents might happen.

And even as they expected, an accident happened, though, in truth, it was hardly an accident, because it was merely a natural consequence, and for many days afterward they blamed themselves for having overlooked it. Science, they knew, but forgot, teaches (*a*) that a cocoanut is three-fourths water, and (*b*) that its shell is air-tight. Science, they also knew and forgot, but soon had cause to remember, also teaches that when the water within an air-tight shell is heated to a certain point it becomes steam, and that pretty soon the steam bursts the shell and there is trouble.

This is what happened in the case of the pile of cocoanuts beside the rear wall. The fire without heated the adobe and it became as warm as the bricks in an oven. Then it, in turn, heated the cocoanuts, and suddenly two of the latter exploded, and Messrs. Dixon and Sarding ducked. Thereafter a dozen exploded in concert, and in a few minutes the interior of the warehouse was much like the interior of a bombarded fort. A large half-section of shell struck Dixon full in the back and floored him, and another shell, a second later, grazed Sarding's head. Then a large and simultaneous explosion of a half-hundred of them cracked the adobe wall, and soon there was a big hole in the wall and the smoke began to pour through it.

Ten seconds later by the clock, Messrs. Dixon and Sarding staggered out of the warehouse by the front door, half suffocated and badly bruised, and the forces of the Señor Gonzalez closed in upon them and captured them and bound them and tore the heavy dress-suit case from Dixon's weak

grasp. Behind them, in the warehouse, lay Sarding's pistol. The Señor Gonzalez laughed loudly. His stratagem had succeeded.

Messrs. Dixon and Sarding, very naturally, were less pleased, and when, after a long march down the hill, they were led to the San Mateo *cuarçel* and locked up together in the only cell, their anger was fearful to behold. When the smoke had left their lungs and their senses returned, they despatched their guard for their jailer.

In half an hour the Señor Gastos y Bianca, governor of the city of Tampico, appeared before him. He had shed his frock coat and glossy hat and wore a pair of khaki trousers much too short for him and the upper half of a pair of pink pajamas.

"We want the boss of the ranch," said Sarding.

"I have ze honair," replied the señor, "to be ze prefect to ze *cuarçel*."

"The job, I suppose, is a side line?" said Dixon, sarcastically.

"Si, señor," replied the señor, not comprehending.

"What are we locked up for?" asked Dixon. "As American citizens we demand to hear the charges against us."

"Ze accusations," replied the señor, "ees, primo, ze endeavor to make ze murdair of ze one anuzzer; secondo, ze endeavor to shoot ze Señor Gonzalez, ze prefect of ze polis; zen comes——"

"Shooting the Count Osterville?"

"Ze captain of ze port."

"And carrying concealed weapons?"

"Si, señor."

"And interfering with the police?"

"Si, señor."

"And obstructing the free passage of persons passing by and along a public highway?"

"Of zat I know nozzing."

"And what else?"

"And ze arson of ze house of ze cocoanuts, and ze——"

Sarding reached through the bars of the cell and grabbed the astonished señor's beard, and the señor, with a quick jump and a scream, departed.

"'No hope, no change,'" said Dixon, quoting Kipling, "'the clouds have shut us in.'"

"But we'll bust loose again," replied Sarding, optimistically. "Hello, there!"

The guard came running, but stopped beyond reach.

"Summon the American consul," said Sarding.

"Si, señor," replied the guard, and then he set off upon his mission, and Sarding and Dixon waited for his return. They waited in all four days and four nights, and while they waited they sweated and stewed and swore. Truly it was not the season in San Mateo. The weather was not bearable. Up at the hotel upon the hill, in all probability, it was as hot as upon the Niger. Down near the sea in the *cuarçel* it was hot beyond human imagination.

Dixon and Sarding stripped to the waist and took turns standing at the little barred window which opened into the over-grown garden behind the tumble-down building, and when they were not thus engaged, they alternately experimented with schemes of escape and gave voice to loud and profane calls for help. The foul air of their cell, and the dreary enervating heat sickened them, and their state of mind subtracted little from their woe. Where was their money? Where was the dress-suit-case and where were the three thousand, four hundred and fifty dollars? The steamer for Kingston would leave next morning, and here they were in a cell with no chance of release—for the bars were stout and close together—and all their winnings—all the fruit of their industry and ingenuity and craft—commandeered, hypothecated, stolen. In his coat pocket Dixon had a banknote for $100. This represented their entire capital.

But after all it was well to be patient and to wait for the arrival of the American consul, if the Mexicans would be foolish enough—which now seemed almost unlikely—to summon him. They would offer him a third interest in their claim in return for his private and official aid, and the next act of the drama would be an exciting one—for the Mexicans.

Three times a day the guard's wife, a dirty, slovenly, half-breed woman, brought them their food—fried plantains, tough chicken hash flavored with garlic, and leathery beef. Each time she called they inquired for her husband, who was evidently making a search for the consul. But from her they obtained no news, for she spoke neither English nor

Spanish, nor yet even good Mexican-Spanish, and so they waited and waited and sweated and fumed and swore.

On the evening of the fourth day the guard returned and announced that the American consul had at last consented to visit them. Five minutes later the consul appeared. He was the Señor de Vegas, managing director of the San Mateo Casino.

"Ze señors ees surprise," he observed, humorously.

Messrs. Dixon and Sarding were mute.

"Nevairzeless," continued the Señor de Vegas, "I have ze honair to represent ze—what you say—ze Oncle Sam—ees it not? I have ze Americano naturalization paper from ze New Orlean. Eet ees goot to haf eet eef some one make ze endeavor to—what you say?—bleed me. One Americano steamsheep comes here in ze year. I have ze honair to visé hees manifest. I have ze salary of ze one hoondart dollar ze year."

"We demand that you secure our release," said Sarding.

"Ah," replied the señor.

"We demand that our money be returned," said Dixon, "and if you refuse we'll come back with a warship and blow your ratty Casino a mile high—with you in it."

The Señor de Vegas smiled.

"To coom back," he said, "we moos' fairst get avay, is it not?"

The eyes of Dixon and Sarding met, and simultaneously they mopped their brows.

"Well, then," said Sarding, wearily, "what's your game?"

"I am ze consul," replied the señor, slowly. "I have ze honair to be compatriots wis you. But also I am ze director of ze Casino. You haf had ze honair of making ze Casino go to ze dead broke. I have had ze honair of taking care of ze money zat you win. Eees eet not ze duty of ze Americano consul to take care of ze money of ze Americanos in ze *cuarçel?* Once more, I am ze director of ze Casino. Also I am ze—what you say?—ze—shudge—ze shudge of ze tribunal of ze joostice."

"Pooh, bah!" said Dixon.

"As ze consul," continued the señor, without halting, "I have ze honair to take care of ze money. As ze director of ze Casino I have ze honair to haf you arrest for ze swindling of me."

"It was a fair game," said Sarding, doggedly.

"As ze shudge," the señor went on, "I haf ze honair of holding ze—what's hees name?—ze inquest on you. Eet will be my shudgment zat you pay me half of ze money back for swindling, and half of ze money for ze punishment for making ze endeavor to shoot ze Señor Gonzalez. Sabe?"

Next morning Messrs. Dixon and Sarding stood in the bow of the Danish tramp steamer Bjornmer as she slowly steamed over the shoal at the entrance of San Mateo harbor and headed east by southeast for Kingston. The captain told them that the Señor de Vegas, the able judge of the court at San Mateo, and the efficient representative of Uncle Sam, had arranged for their tickets. This made the $100 banknote in Dixon's pocket clear capital. He drew it forth, and the two gazed at it.

"We'll begin all over again," said Dixon. "I know of a joint in Venezuela that——"

"*We?*" said Sarding, and then paused a moment. "Will you shake hands and forget it?" he asked, eagerly. "If I hadn't tried to beat you out of your share, we might have——"

"Aw, forgit it!" said Dixon, lighting a cigarette. "As Kipling says, 'let us leave the dead behind us.' It's over now. Let it rest."

"And we've learned," said Sarding, "that in unity there's strength. In the future, I, for one, sha'n't forget it."

"Nor I," said Dixon.

And they shook hands.

# Anecdotes.

IN this department a first prize of $5.00 in gold, and second and third prizes of an annual subscription to Short Stories each, will be given for the best, the second and the third best original or selected anecdotes sent in before the 1st day of the month following the date of this issue. No other compensation is made for matter used in this department. **The sources from which all selected or reprinted anecdotes have been taken must be clearly stated. The Editor cannot return contributions or correspond about them. If the story is valuable keep a copy of it.** Address "Anecdotes," care The Current Literature Publishing Co., 34 West 26th Street, New York

## Ole Bull.

When the great Norwegian violinist made his first visit to Nashville, Tenn., as long ago as the '40's of the past century, the city was not then prepared to receive him in the handsome style which was given him on a later occasion. Nor was the audience, which then crowded to hear so great a celebrity, educated up to that class of music now familiar to even the ragged urchins on the street.

But in the society of the place at that time was a coterie of bright, attractive women, who could have well graced a foreign court, and many of them very creditable musicians themselves. Among them was Mrs. Thomas Smith, a musical enthusiast, who, Maurice Strakosch said, was the finest amateur pianist he had met in this country.

On the evening of Ole Bull's first appearance before the Nashville public, Mrs. Smith was, of course, among the audience assembled to hear him. The place where he had been invited to perform was known as the "Odd Fellows' Hall," a handsome new edifice, worthy of a more fitting stage than the impromptu affair, hurriedly erected for the occasion, and made of rough boards, not even carpeted.

On Mrs. Smith's arrival there she noticed at once the rude platform, for the use of the great artist, and in her admiration for him, and with a desire to show him her regret for the incongruity of his surroundings, she stepped forward, and taking off her large, elegant, black velvet mantle, spread it out smoothly on the rough floor, near the front edge of the stage, just where he would be expected to stand.

Perhaps she was romantically reminded to do so from that pretty little episode in the history of Queen Elizabeth and gallant Sir Walter Raleigh, and though neither queen nor belted knight played this time a similar though reversed part, it was veritably an Elizabeth spreading a mantle at the feet of genius.

The audience looked on, pleased and interested, and held its breath, when a few moments later the great maestro appeared upon the stage, to see what he would do. He advanced gracefully, bowing and smiling, and as he reached the handsome mantle lying there, he made another most courtly bow, and with a wave of his hand to show his appreciation of the delicate compliment paid him, stepped to one side, and drew his magic bow across the charmed strings of his violin, with that rare and matchless touch which electrified his hearers then, as it always did, whenever he appeared before them.—Mrs. FELIX SMITH.

## What the Choir Sang.

The minister was young. It was with mingled pride and trepidation that he accepted an invitation to preach in a large city church. When the eventful morning came he walked up the aisle

with his best sermon in his hand and his best patent leathers on his feet—they were new and shiny, and though he anticipated some pain from standing in unbroken shoes, he wished to do honor to the fashionable audience assembled.

To his discomfort he found instead of a large old-fashioned pulpit like the one to which he was accustomed, only a small reading stand. At its side was a chair which he must occupy in full view of the audience. He felt as he sat there that his shoes were extremely conspicuous and obviously new. His embarrassment was not lessened when the choir, directly behind him, arose and began the opening anthem:

"How beautiful are the feet—how beautiful are the feet—" they sang. And then to prevent the possibility of any mistake they continued:

"Of them that preach—of them that preach!"—MARY ALDEN HOPKINS.

## William C. Whitney as a Mascot.

A story is going the rounds about William C. Whitney and one of his negro hostlers. Mr. Whitney had noticed that each time he visited his stable this man watched every move he made, and, upon one pretext or another, managed to keep near to him from the moment he entered the stable till he left it. The financier was greatly puzzled by the conduct of the negro, and one day he called him aside.

"Peter," he said, "why do you follow me around and watch me so closely every time I enter the stable? You must have some good reason for your actions. What is it?"

"Has I gotter 'splain, sah?"

"Certainly."

"I's powerful afraid dat it'll spoil de charm, sah."

"Spoil what charm? What do you mean?"

"Well, sah, it's dis yere way. Ev'ry mawnin' I looks up de entries fo' de day's races. Den I names things in de stable fo' de hosses, see. De wheels of de kerriges; de heads, an' de tails, an' de shoulders, an' de flanks of de hosses; de harnesses, whips—ev'rything in de stable's done gotter name of one of de hosses dat'll run in de races to-day. Fo' instance, when yo' comes in you walks 'round an' 'spec's things, an' yo' touches things. Whatever yo' touch, I plays. Dat air wheel what yo' just shook, ter see if it's sound, is named Gold Heels, an' dis nigger's gwine ter play Gold Heels fo' de limit."

Mr. Whitney laughed heartily. "Are you lucky, Peter?"

"Lucky? Why, Mr. Whitney, dem han's of yourn knows mo' 'bout prophecy dan ole 'Lijah hisself!"—Selected by C. S. from The Argonaut.

(In accordance with our offer the first prize of $5 in gold, and second and third prizes of subscriptions to SHORT STORIES for one year, have been awarded, respectively, to Mrs. Felix Smith, 1017 Belmont avenue, Nashville, Tenn.; Mary Alden Hopkins, 54 Ohio street, Bangor, Me., and Chas. Stutz, 1025 Tremont avenue. Baltimore, Md., for the foregoing three best anecdotes submitted before December 1st.)

## Lucky for Pat.

An Irishman accosted a gentleman on the street last night with a request for the time. The gentleman, suspecting that Pat wished to snatch his watch, gave him a stinging rap on the nose, with the remark, "It has just struck one."

"Be jabers," retorted Pat, "Oi'm glad Oi didn't ax yees an hour ago!"—Selected from the Boston Brown Book, by Ralph M. Broadhurst.

## A Live Battery.

Mr. B.—— was a poor, hard-working, but very credulous man in whom agents always found a ready purchaser. So, when a man came through the country selling "electric batteries, guaranteed

to cure rheumatism and heart failure," he had no difficulty in persuading Mr. B——, that one of the batteries would be "just the blessing for that pain in the upper part of the chest."

The morning after the purchase, Mr. B—— fastened the battery about his neck according to directions and went to hoeing in the garden. About two hours later he returned to the house to rest and remarked to his wife:

"I don't know whether this battery is going to do any good or not; but for the last ten minutes it has been burning terribly."

"Does it burn just like fire?" queried his wife to whom the properties of electricity were entirely unknown.

"Not exactly," he answered. "It is more of a stinging feeling and comes in throbs. But it is powerful strong. I've heard that in some places they run cars with 'lectricity, and I shouldn't wonder if they do. Why, this battery feels strong enough to pull."

At this moment he placed his hand upon the battery with a gentle pressure. A spasm of pain passed over his face; he jumped to his feet and exclaimed:

"I can't stand this."

Seizing the cord from which it was suspended, he drew the battery from about his neck. Still the pain continued, and flinging his collar open he looked at the crimson spot where the metallic disk had rested. In the center of this was the curled-up form of a large red ant.—OPHELIA S. MCMORRIES.

## His Christmas Turkey.

To the Southern darkey the magic word Christmas contains a world of suggestiveness, and he begins many weeks in advance to anticipate the festivities incident to that auspicious occasion. Two weeks before Christmas Uncle Rastus and Pompey Johnson, two typical dark-visaged citizens of South-west Virginia, were discussing the approach of the great holiday in general, and the possibility of possessing a Christmas turkey in particular.

"Does yer ever have a tu'key on Chris'mas, Mr. Johnsin'?" Uncle Rastus asked with keen interest.

"Yas, yas, Unc Rastus, I allus has a tu'key, on Chris'mas; does *you*?"

"No, no, I never has none; dis here ole nigger's powerful onlucky somehow," he concluded mournfully.

"Does yer pray fer hit, Unc Rastus?"

"No, ain't neber prayed fer one yit, Mr. Johnsin'."

"Wal effen yer pray fer hit 'fore Chris'mas, Unc Rastus, yer'll git one sho'!"

Uncle Rastus accepted the suggestion with joyous faith, and religiously offered daily his request for a turkey. On Christmas day he waited with great patience the appearance of his turkey, and night bringing no fulfillment of his fond hopes, with a heavy heart he called at the home of Mr. Johnson, where, much to his surprise, he found that elated individual enjoying the remnants of a fine, large gobbler.

"Wal, Unc Rastus," calmly observed Mr. Johnson, "did yer git a tu'key?"

"No, didn't git no tu'key, Mr. Johnsin'."

"Wal, did yer *pray* fer hit, Unc Rastus?"

"Yas, prayed ev'ry night; prayed good and hard, but dar warn't no tu'key fer dis ole nigger."

"Wal, did yer—did yer go fer hit?"

Uncle Rastus's eyes grew large and luminous as he replied, "No, didn't go fer hit, Mr. Johnsin'."

"Wal, Unc Rastus, yer gotter *go* fer hit, 'cause de Lord don't deliver nothin'!"—MARGARET LEWIS ARDE.

## A Safe Experiment.

An Irish magistrate was speaking of an occasion when he was in peril from a ferocious Kerry bull.

"Most men would have hastened from the spot," he said, "but I sat down and stared him full in the face."

"How did it work?" queried a breathless bystander.

"Like a charm; the bull didn't even offer to touch me!"

"Very remarkable! How do you account for it?"

"Well, sometimes I've thought it was because I sat down on the top branch of a very tall tree," said the magistrate. —Selected by Lucie R. Beardsworth.

## A Very Plain Man.

This story of Bishop Beckwith of Georgia is just getting into circulation. He was traveling and seated a few seats in front of him in the railroad car was a man who was formerly one of the members of his church. The latter relieved his mind to the conductor in language far more forcible than polite, not fit for the ears of the public, much less those of the clergy. Casually glancing around he discovered his bishop, and, naturally very much confused, realized some kind of an apology was necessary.

"I am a very plain man, you see, Bishop," he said; "I speak plainly and I call a spade a spade."

"Indeed?" answered the bishop very quietly, "I should have thought you would have called it a 'damned old shovel.'"—MINNIE E. MARCY.

## The Last Hope.

The following conversation is said to have passed between a city man and an old negro farmer whose son had tried the civil-service examination:

"Well, old man, did your son pass the examination?"

"No, suh; dey turned him down."

"What was the trouble?"

"Short on 'rithmetic, suh."

"Anything else?"

"An' geography."

"Yes."

"An' spellin'."

"Nothing more?"

"Nothin' mo', suh, 'ceptin' grammar an' hist'ry an' a few other things."

"Well, what will he do now?"

"Well, suh, he des 'bout decided ter teach school."—Selected from The Atlanta Constitution, by R. Y.

## Pat's Mistake.

Paddy's distress on waking was very natural but amusing. He was observed in the morning to be looking unusually blank and perplexed, and his friend inquired what ailed him.

"Ah! but I have had a drame."

"Was it a good dream or a bad dream?"

"Faith," said Pat, "and it was a little of both, and I'll be after telling it t' ye. I dramed I was with the Prisidint. He is as great a gintleman as is in the district, he is, and he asked me wud I have a drink. I said to him Wud a duck swim? He smiled like and taking the lemons and sugar and making ready for a dhrop o' punch, he asked me wud I have it hot or cowld. 'I'll have it hot,' I replied, and wid that he wint down into the kitchen for the biling water, but before he got back I woke up, and now it's distressing me I didn't take it cowld."—Selected by James S. Driscoll, from Harper's Monthly.

## Limited Accommodations.

An American family now residing in Mexico think they have a very good joke at the expense of a young lady from the States, who came to make them a visit recently. Mr. and Mrs. H—— met her at the train, and she introduced a distinguished-looking gentleman who had made her acquaintance on the trip, and as they were leaving the station she invited him to call.

"Does your friend know our address?" inquired Mrs. H——.

"Oh, yes," replied Miss Wisconsin, airily; "I told him *Apartado* 29. I remembered it from having written it on your letters so often, you know. And," she added, complacently, "I was very proud of knowing so much Mexican."

"Well," said Mr. H——, as they were driving off, "I suppose you are expect-

ing to put up with all sorts of deprivations down here in this queer country. but I feel that I ought to tell you that you are likely to find your quarters uncomfortably crowded, especially for entertaining."

"Why, won't your parlor hold two?"

"Well, yes, I think our parlor will, but I have my doubts about our *post-office box!*"—Selected by Eleanor Marchant, from Harper's Monthly.

## The Octogenarian.

They were neither of them brilliant scholars, but they liked to move with the times as regards their knowledge of current events, so the daily newspaper was regularly delivered at their humble domicile, and it was Jennie's duty to read out during breakfast time all the most interesting items of the day. One morning after wading through the latest intelligence from the front, she turned to another page of the paper and said:

"Herbie, it says here that another octogenarian's dead."

"What's an octogenarian?"

"Well, I don't quite know what they are, but they must be very sickly creatures. You never hear of them but they're dying."—Selected by S. W., from the London Answer.

## And a Preacher, Too.

In a small town in the south of England lived a clergyman named Smythe. who was quite renowned locally. He was very nervous about storms, and while traveling to America he chanced to meet one. He went to the captain and in very excited words asked him if they were in danger.

"The best way to find out," replied the captain, "is to see what the sailors are doing. If they are cursing everything is safe, but if they are praying we are in danger."

Rev. Smythe followed by a traveling companion went to the sailors' quarters and on opening the door and finding the mood they were in, he exclaimed:

"Oh, thank God, they are cursing," and returned upstairs very much relieved. —M. WAYNE.

## The Professor's Advice.

A venerable professor of a noted medical college was addressing the graduating class.

"Gentlemen," he said, "you are going out into the world of action. You will likely follow in some degree the example of those who have preceded you. Among other things you may marry. Let me entreat you to be kind to your wives. Be patient with them. Do not fret under petty domestic trials. When one of you asks your wife to go driving, do not worry if she is not ready at the appointed time. Have a treatise on your specialty always with you. Read it while you wait, and I assure you, gentlemen," and the professor's kindly smile seemed to show a trace of irony, "you will be astonished at the vast amount of information you will acquire in this way."—ROY O. RANDALL.

## Just a Little Tact.

A pompous man walked into the House press gallery.

"Whom do you want to see?" asked Doorkeeper Mann.

"Nobody particular," said the pompous man; "I think I will take a seat here."

"Not here," replied Mann gently. "This gallery is reserved for the press."

The pompous man swelled up. "I want you to understand I will sit where I like," he said. "I am a taxpayer and I own my share of this capitol."

"Oh!" replied Mann, "why didn't you say so? If you are a taxpayer, it is different. We have a special gallery for taxpayers. Come right this way," and he led him to the public gallery and gave him a seat.

The pompous man sat there in conscious triumph all the afternoon.—Selected by C. J., from the New York World.

## The Best Place on Earth.

An Irishman, on his dying bed, called for a priest. After receiving the sacrament of his church, he requested the father please to have him buried in the Jewish cemetery.

"Why, my son?" said the latter, "you know you must be buried in consecrated ground."

"Oh, father, the Jewish cemetery is the last place where the devil will hunt for my soul."—MRS. MARIE T. GUIZONNIER.

## Easy Money.

W. A. Sponsler, when in the State Legislature, was given to the making of very elaborate and florid speeches, and one day brought an address to a close with *Vox populi, vox Dei.*

"I'll bet you don't know the meaning of what Sponsler just said," said Al Crawford to Hugh E. Mackin.

"I don't know!" replied Mackin, indignantly. "Of course, I know!"

"You don't know for ten dollars!" suggested Crawford.

Mackin, still indignant, posted his part of the wager with another member of the Legislature, and Crawford said tauntingly:

"Well, now, tell us, what does it mean?"

"*Vox populi, vox Dei,*" quoted Mackin, solemnly, "as everybody knows, is French for 'My God! Why hast thou forsaken me?'"

"Give him the money," said Crawford. "Darned, if he don't know after all!"—Selected by L. W. Duval, from Philadelphia Times.

## Just a Hint.

"Father," asked "Tommy," the other day, "why is it that the boy is said to be the father of the man?'

Mr. Tompkins had never given this subject any thought, and was hardly prepared to answer offhand.

"Why, why," he said, stumbling, "it's so because it is, I suppose."

"Well," said "Tommy," "since I'm your father I'm going to give you a ticket to the theater and a dollar besides. I always said that if I were a father I wouldn't be so stingy as the rest of them are. Go in and have a good time while you're young. I never had any chance myself!"

Mr. Tompkins gazed in blank amazement at "Tommy." Slowly the significance of the hint dawned upon him. Producing the silver coin, he said:

"Take it, Thomas. When you really do become a father, I hope it won't be your misfortune to have a son who is smarter than yourself."—Selected by Hortense Blackburn, from American Boy.

## Quite So.

The Oak Park girl had just come home from her first Ping-Pong party. She had never played the game before that evening. When she entered the library her father was folding up his newspaper, preparatory to going to bed.

"Do you know, papa, I discovered to-night that I never really cared about anything before in my life," she said by way of introduction. "I want you to know about it."

"Yes?" said the old man with a rising inflection on the word. He was interested, perhaps excited. His daughter's face was serious.

"I have fallen in love with Ping-Pong."

"What!" exclaimed pater familias.

His dismay now was unmistakable. Just then his wife entered the room. He turned indignant eyes upon her:

"You are a nice woman!" he shouted at her. "What do you mean, madam, by bringing up your daughter the way you have done? No, don't interrupt—it's matter enough. Owing to your skillful management our little girl has lost what

little sense she was born with. She has fallen in love with a Chinaman!"

Five minutes later the old gentleman was apologizing both to his wife and his daughter. As he went off to bed, however, he muttered under his breath:

"Ping-Pong, ping-pong; that's a nice name for a game!"—Selected by Arthur Bentley, from the Chicago Chronicle.

## A Cheerful View.

Two men who had been sitting together in the seat near to the door of a railway car, became engaged in an animated controversy, and their loud voices attracted the attention of all the other passengers. Suddenly one of them arose and said:

"Ladies and gentlemen: I appeal to you to decide a disputed point. My friend here insists that not more than three people out of every five believe they have souls. I take a more cheerful view of humanity than that. Will all of you who believe you have souls raise your right hands?"

Every hand in the car went up.

"Thank you," he said with a smile. "Keep them up just a minute. Now will all of you who believe in a hereafter please raise your left hand also?"

Every hand in the car went up.

"Thank you," he said. "Now while all of you have your hands raised," he continued, drawing a pair of revolvers, and leveling them, "my friend here will go down the aisle and relieve you of whatever valuable articles you may have. Lively, now, Jim."—Selected by Carroll Barden, from Good Literature.

## Geese or Gooses.

The particular kind of a smoothing iron known among tailors as a goose came near upsetting the reason of a bright young clerk and the proprietor of a Chicago tailoring establishment. The manager wanted two of the instruments mentioned, and so told the clerk, but after the latter had sat for some time writing out the order, he looked up in a bewildered way and asked: "What would you call the plural of a tailors' goose?"

"Why, geese is the plural of goose," said the manager.

"Well, you wouldn't have me write an order for two tailors' geese, would you?"

"That does not sound scarcely sensible in this connection," said the proprietor. "How would it do to say two tailors' gooses?"

The boy turned to the dictionary and shaking his head remarked: "Webster does not give any such plural as that to goose and I won't."

The situation was growing serious when the clerk suddenly fell to writing with the exclamation: "Now, I'll fix it!" And the order which he handed to the head of the house to sign did fix it, for it read:

"Messrs. Brown & Co.,

Hardware Dealers, 8th Ave.:

"Please send me a No. 1 tailors' goose, and, By the eternal! send me another just like it."—ANNIE K. CHATFIELD.

## Would Like to, But——

An amusing incident occurred one day in a music store in which a man worked who was hard of hearing. In fact, for him to hear at all, the speaker must speak quite vociferously.

One day when all the other clerks had gone to dinner a very handsomely dressed lady came in and asked in a very low tone of voice for the song "Won't you be my sweetheart?"

"You will have to speak a little louder, ma'am," said the man, "I am deaf."

Accordingly, the name of the song was repeated once, twice, thrice, in the same low voice. By this time, his patience being exhausted he took from his pocket a small note-book and pencil and requested the lady to write what she wanted. This seemed to anger her and she called out loud enough to be

heard on the opposite side of the street for the song "Won't you be my sweetheart?" Only the name of it was heard by him, and without any forethought, he replied:

"Madam, I am a married man."

—SALLIE HACKETT.

## The News Gratified Him.

"Charlie" Adler, who was at one time assemblyman from "De Ate" district, New York, took a trip across the continent and after his return told the following story concerning himself:

"On my arrival at San Francisco, as a joke, I sent to a friend of mine, well known for his aversion to spending money, a telegram with charges collect, reading: 'I am perfectly healthy.'

"The information was evidently gratifying to him, for about a week after sending the telegram an express package was delivered at my room on which I paid $4.50 charges. Upon opening the package I found a regulation New York street paving block on which was pasted a card which read:

"'This is the weight which your recent telegram lifted from my heart."

—MINNIE E. MARCY.

## Fellow Countrymen.

An English actor tells a story, which M. A. P. repeats, of an Irishman named Flanagan, who had been out of work for some time, and at length applied to a circus proprietor for a position.

There were no regular places open, but the manager looked Flanagan over and said:

"Our largest lion died last week, but we kept his skin, and if you like to get into it and be shown as a lion, you can have the job."

Flanagan agreed. At the first show the proprietor stepped into the cage and said, "Ladies and gentlemen. To prove the docility of this roaring lion, I shall order him into the cage with a ferocious tiger."

Flanagan hung back, but the circus proprietor prodded him with a sword and threatened to run him through, and the "lion" was driven into the same cage with the tiger. There he backed into a corner and cried, "Shpare me!"

The ferocious tiger jumped to his feet and answered, "Ye needn't be afraid o' me! I'm an Irishman meself!"

—Selected from The Youth's Companion, by Lyle B. Marcy.

## Of Course Not.

A public official in Baltimore tells the following story:

"A man dropped into the office one day while I was writing a letter to my wife. He stood directly behind me. I continued to write and, at the same time, entered into conversation with him in a desultory sort of way. The impudence of the fellow was so well established that I felt sure he was reading every word written. Finding it impossible to continue the letter, I wrote:

"I shall now close, as there is an impudent fellow looking over my shoulder reading every word I write."

The man jumped back and exclaimed:

"'It's not the truth, sir! I have not read a word of what you have written.'"

—Selected from the Baltimore News, by E. G. Mathews.

## At a Theosophist Boarding-House.

I have my meals at a boarding-house in Twenty-fifth street, where most of the people are, or suppose themselves to be, theosophists, writes a Drawer reader. The landlady, a bustling, capable, kind-hearted woman, is a thoroughgoing believer, and from time to time has some of these various *swamis* to dinner—handsome, dark-complexioned persons, with names that few people can pronounce, but which she, from having been brought up among just such folks among the hills of Connecticut, has as pat as you or

I can say Smith and Robinson. As is natural, the talk here runs very much on the peculiarities of the Theosophist faith—reincarnations and the like. The waiters are Dennis, an Irishman, and Elijah, a colored man, who have in some degree caught the Theosophist contagion. At any rate they must discuss the subject together, if I may judge from a remark I heard Dennis drop lately. There is a man and his wife at this boarding-house who are very fond of nuts. They ask for them at breakfast, eat a great many, and make a good deal of litter, which the servants do not like. As Dennis was carrying off the débris the other morning he was heard to say to Elijah, "Shure at their next reincarnation, bedad, they'll be squirrels!"—Selected from Harper's Monthly, by Eleanor Marchant.

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## An Easy Way.

There was a young priest who was to preach his first sermon. He was, of course, much embarrassed when he stood up in the pulpit.

He said, "I am going to preach a sermon about the greatest miracle that ever happened. There were ten men fed on ten thousand loaves of bread and ten thousand fishes."

Mr. Finigan, who sat close to the pulpit, said, "Sure, that's no miracle. I could do it mesilf."

Of course, the young priest was still more embarrassed, but he went on with his sermon. The next Sunday when he came to the pulpit, he said:

"I am requested to repeat the sermon of last Sunday. There were ten thousand men fed on ten loaves of bread and ten fishes." Then leaning over, he said, "And could you do that, Mr. Finigan?"

"I could," says Finigan.

"And how would you do it, Mr. Finigan?"

"Why, I would feed them on what was left over from last Sunday."—Wm. F. Kellogg.


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### Surprised Eliza.

A story is told of a Pennsylvania farmer who wore his old suit until everyone was tired of it, and his estimable wife was almost ashamed of the hustling man who had been inside it so long. But one day he went to town to sell his produce and while there he determined to buy a new suit, and, happy thought, surprise Eliza. So he bundled a neat suit into the wagon and drove homeward.

It was after night as he hurried homeward and at a bridge over a river he stood up on the wagon and "peeled" and threw the despised old suit in the water. Then he reached for his new clothes. They were gone—had jolted out of the wagon. The night was cold and his teeth chattered as he hurried home. He surprised Eliza even more than he anticipated.—Selected by E. L. Bostwick, from The Omaha Mercury.

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### No Cause for Uneasiness.

During the earthquake a funny thing happened near our home. The new telephone line had just been run through the country and had caused some of the darkies a great deal of uneasiness; so on this night when the house was rocking and all kinds of noises were being heard, old Uncle Tom, one of the old-time servants, after investigating outside thoroughly, came in and consoled his wife by saying:

"Neber mine, ole lady, it's nothin' but dat telefire wire, spatching messages—we will rest easy!"—JOE KIRBY.

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### Wanted Some More.

The following is told of a green son of the Emerald Isle. He was eating green corn from the cob for the first time. Handing the cob to the waiter, he asked: "Will you plaze put some more beans on me sthick?"—Selected by Lucie R. Beardsworth.

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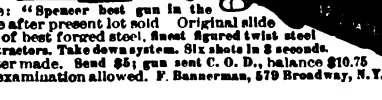

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# MOTLEY'S the Only Wear: A Story of the Stage, by Ruth Edwards. Illustrations by Bessie Collins Pease.*

THE Star turned upon the Leading Man with flashing eyes. "I don't believe it!" she cried vehemently.

She was tricked out in all the bravery of her make-up for the ball-room scene; her long golden-brown hair, falling to her waist, was cunningly confined by strings of pearls woven in and out among its shining ripples; her cheeks, delicately rouged, accentuated the sapphire sparkle of the large eyes underneath the penciled brows and darkened lids; the curves of her lips were exaggerated with cherry paste. In the softened light of her dressing-room she glowed and gleamed with an unnatural beauty. The Leading Man, meeting her

*Written for Short Stories.

gaze unflinchingly, noted how her slender figure, in the long plain white satin gown, stiffened by its embroidery of jewels, trembled; how the gems on the high-necked bodice flashed as they rose and fell with her quick breathing. He had never seen so beautiful a Juliet as this one to whom he nightly played Romeo.

"It is strange," she went on, "that I cannot make you understand that I will *not* believe anything against him. All you can say, all you can do will not change my opinion one jot. Every word you speak against him has simply one effect upon me, and only one, that of lowering my opinion of you. Do I make myself clear?" she asked, letting her brilliant eyes meet his with a deliberate cruelty.

He winced, and a look of pain for an instant deepened the lines about his mouth, but he banished it as instantly with a half-sarcastic smile. He bowed.

"Quite!" he said simply.

"Then will you be so good as to leave me?" she asked with her girlish dignity. "There seems nothing left to be said."

He hesitated for a moment, half turned toward the door, then once more confronted her, his face earnest under its make-up.

"You mistake. There is much left to be said, and I will not leave you until I have said it. Oh, think of me what you will—call me what you will—I know too well the figure I must cut in your eyes. There's nothing more contemptible than the man who goes about heralding the weaknesses of his friends—and this man was my friend once, whatever he may be now. God! but I loved him! I was as slow to believe evil of him as you are. I could not think that anything but the best could exist with so much talent and grace, so much good-fellowship and charm. But he was false to me in every way that one man can be false to another—false to me as a friend, as a fellow-worker in this profession of mummery which we both chose, utterly false and selfish I found him in everything!"

The Star turned away from him with a curl of the lips, "Go on," she said proudly, "I have told you the effect all this has upon me."

Once more the man winced, and again the look of pain darkened his eyes. "Your loyalty is a thing a man might die to win. It is a pity it should be wasted," he said.

She turned upon him with large-eyed scorn, "I beg you to keep your pity at least. You burden me too much already with your solicitude."

He was silent, but he had forced her to look at him, and after a moment he went on quietly: "Sincerity and honesty count for so little when pitted against a charm like his. I know the witchery of the man as well as you can. Only a fool would seek the unequal battle. Well—let it go—I acknowledge my folly, but you must be saved!"

She sank down in a chair with languid resignation. "All this wearies me," she said. Catching a glimpse of herself in the long mirror opposite, she raised her arms and arranged the pearls in her hair.

His impotence in the face of her indifference maddened him and sent the blood to his cheeks in a hot flood. But he controlled himself with an effort and went on gently.

"Listen; if you were like some of the women I have seen

in the theater, I should not wound myself by giving you pain. But you are different. You are so young to have gained the place you have. You have come through all the temptations which beset a girl in our profession, perhaps more than in any other, absolutely unspotted. You have, I firmly believe, such a great future before you that you must not wreck your life by the infatuation which you have for this man. I tell you, you *shall* not do it! O why, in heaven's name, cannot I make you see him as he is, now, before it is too late, for the awakening will surely come some day!"

She glanced at the man before her, so boyish in the silken doublet and hose of Romeo, the lines in his face softened and smoothed away by the cleverness of his make-up, and, in spite of herself, the sincerity of the man behind the actor forced itself upon her recognition.

"I have never done you the injustice of thinking that you had not my good at heart," she said less coldly. "Your methods are mistaken, that is all. You overlook the fact that I am quite capable of caring for my own affairs. And if I were not, by what right do you appoint yourself my manager?"

"By no right which you will recognize as such." He paused abruptly and walked nervously to a table, stood for a moment looking down and fingering a little jeweled dagger which lay there. Then he raised his eyes, and continued with a forced calm, which grew less with every word he uttered.

"Do you know why my Romeo has been the greatest success of my life? Do you know why it has gained me a place that I had given up hoping to achieve? It is because in playing it to your Juliet I have not been acting, I have felt it all for you—all the yearning, the hot and hopeless passion. Each time we have gone through those scenes together I have been telling you as Juliet what I did not dare to tell you as a woman."

She rose from her chair and put out a protesting hand. "O, stop!" she cried. "At least I thought your zeal in my behalf was disinterested." Then she was silent before the look of dumb entreaty in his eyes.

"I beg you not to deny me that charity," he answered. "I know that it is utterly hopeless. If I knew you loved me, I think perhaps I should have found strength not to tell you. My life has not been of the kind which I could offer to you.

I might cheat myself into believing that the love of a woman like you might work my salvation. But, after all, would it? I am many years older than you, too old to change. I would rather see you as you are, high-priestess of your art, than have you step down from your pedestal to such as I. But I swear of the two I am more worthy than he."

She smiled, secure in her faith. "That is a question we need not discuss," she answered lightly.

He felt suddenly very tired. Her calm dismissal of his passionate outburst left the future a blank. But what, after all, had he hoped to gain thereby? Well, merely a little toleration, perhaps.

"Pardon me," he said, with a faint smile, "it is a question that must be discussed here and now. Not the question of my unworthiness, that is accepted without a question, but of his. This is the last time I shall seek to help you. After this I shall not disturb you again. It is almost the end of the season—after it is over I shall no more act Romeo to your Juliet, I shall go back to the old haunts, the old companions. Success counts for very little after all."

"You are a strange man," she said scornfully. "With one breath you accuse a friend falsely, with the next you announce your intention of living the very life for which you condemn him. And you expect your judgment to have weight with me! But I tell you his life is as absolutely above reproach as a man's can be, however his choice of friends may have influenced him for evil before I knew him."

The shaft struck home and brought forth a cry from the man before her. "Above reproach! Where do you suppose he is now? What do you suppose he is doing?"

"You know where he is as well as I do—in Philadelphia, resting after his hard work this long winter! If ever man needed a rest, it is he."

The actor laughed. "Resting! Yes, if living the wildest life a man can live be resting! If squandering his money in every evil way that money may be squandered is resting! Ah, yes, he rests well! How much money has he borrowed from you to help him in his—*rest?*"

She sprang to her feet and confronted him with clenched hands, her slender figure trembling, her sapphire eyes blazing. "O, this is unbearable!" she cried.

The actor was pale under his paint. "Haven't I told

you before that this is his way? Haven't I seen him use his grace and charm for this purpose many times? Utterly false and selfish I have found him, utterly without principle! O, he loves you, no doubt! What man would not? But it is not your love he wants most. That he could forswear. He saw you young, beautiful, alone, successful in your art—what more did he ask? O, listen to me and let me do this good thing at least, convince you of what he is!"

The earnestness of his appeal sent him a step toward her with outstretched hands. Unconsciously he had fallen into a stage posture of entreaty, but no audience watching him from the galleries and stalls had ever seen his face transfigured with the look it wore now.

They stood for a moment measuring strength with strength, the woman offended, disdainful, the man accepting her disdain, but brushing it aside that he might win the right to speak. Compelled by something which emanated from him, the woman yielded to his will.

She glanced impatiently at the clock. "Well, convince me then! But be brief. If you are to be in time for your cue this interview must be brought to a close in a few minutes, and, once closed, I need not tell you it will be useless for you to try to reopen it at any future time."

He made a gesture of acquiescence. "I understand. It is my last chance."

He walked over to the mantel-piece, and leaning his elbow upon it, rested his head on his hand, a picturesque figure in his brilliant costume, the light playing merrily with his golden chains and the jeweled scabbard of the sword which hung at his side.

"After all, what is the use?" he said hopelessly, "You will not believe."

"O, don't stop now," she said ironically. "Make the most of your opportunity. Who knows the effect your eloquence may have upon me?"

Her mockery fell upon him like a whip and stung him into action. He abandoned his drooping attitude for one of upright determination.

"Yes, I will go on," he said, "I will take advantage of your permission. You do not deny he has had money from you—under what pretense?"

"I deny your right to question me! He asked and I

gave. It was my own, to do with as I chose. There were investments. Have I not a right to do as I will with my own?"

He laughed. "The same old story! With his fertile imagination he might have contrived something new, it seems to me. But, after all, why bother to invent new lies when old ones will answer?"

"You shall not hint at such dishonor without explanation!" she cried.

"O, the explanation is easy enough, save for one thing—it is not fit for your ears. The uses that men such as he find for money are as many as they are evil. His life, as I have told you before, is utterly selfish, utterly base. Why, what if I should tell you that I know for a certainty that the watch you gave him as a betrothal present is at this moment in a pawn-shop, so little did he value it in comparison to what the money it brought might secure him in the way of—rest?"

"What!" she cried, her faith for the first time wavering. And then, "O no, it is impossible! He would starve rather than part with that!"

The actor stepped toward her eagerly, quick to seize the first impression he had made. "If I convince you of this—if I prove to you beyond a doubt that this is true, will you believe the rest?"

"But what object could he have? He had money and to spare," she said, unheeding his question.

He was again quick to seize his advantage.

"Grant that he has, then. Grant that there was no object for the sacrifice. Would not that make the fact of his having parted with your gift all the more convicting? Listen, go yourself to Philadelphia to-morrow. Go to a certain address that I will give you, and if you do not find your keepsake has met the fate I tell you, then you may go your way. I shall be satisfied. The man who has it is an old acquaintance of mine. A word from me will be sufficient. He will show it to you."

He turned to her desk and hastily scribbled something on a card. Then he stepped toward her where she stood straight and frowning, one hand clasping the back of the chair from which she had risen.

"Will you do as I ask you? Will you put my truth to

the test?" he asked pleadingly, offering her the bit of pasteboard.

"No," she replied, all her displeasure flashing out again, "I refuse to test your truth by doubting his."

The warning summons for Romeo sounded. He walked to the mirror and stuck the card between the glass and the gilded frame.

"You may think better of it," he said and was gone. The next moment the Star, still standing where he had left her, heard the welcoming applause of the audience and knew that Romeo had stepped upon the stage.

She swept her jeweled gown across the room to her dressing-table, and, taking up a picture which stood there among the tiny pots of rouge and paste and endless paraphernalia of an actress's toilet, gazed intently at a face so absolutely beautiful in outline and feature that it was small wonder few women had been able to resist the spell it exerted. The Star had never altogether liked the photographs of the man who enthralled her. They did not do him justice, she was wont to assert. And yet, wherein did they fail? It would be hard to say. It was only that, in spite of the marvelous beauty of the man, there lurked a vague expression about the eyes and mouth to which she could not give a name, and yet which filled her with dissatisfaction. To-night she asked herself if this elusive something which she saw in the

picture could be indeed the real man peeping from behind the mask.

"I don't believe it! I don't believe it!" she cried passionately, and then found that the tears were running down her cheeks.

She hastily wiped them away, gingerly, to avoid working havoc with her make-up, and rang for her dresser.

"Quick, Marie," she cried, "Put on a little more rouge while I touch up my eyes a bit."

Presently she stood before the audience, slender, girlish, winsome in her straight white gown, the footlights turning

her eyes to soft blackness, her lips parted in the dreamy smile with which she answered her nurse's summons with the words, "How now, who calls?" bending and bowing to the storm of applause from the kindly throng which would not permit her continuing with her lines until its enthusiasm for this favorite, who had played herself into its heart that winter, had been appeased.

But what had happened to their Juliet to-night? She had never looked more beautiful, but she played with none of the passionate fervor which had been the keynote of her great success. She seemed unable to rise to the height of her power. A listlessness and weariness was upon all she did. Once she stumbled in her lines—she who was absolutely faultless in purity and precision of enunciation.

After the third act, when she came before the curtain hand in hand with Romeo to bow and smile to the generous audience willing to bestow applause beyond her deserts, he stopped her for a moment as they passed again into the wings, regarding her anxiously.

"What is it?" he asked.

"Nothing," she answered, with her head held high. Then she turned upon him fiercely; "I know I'm acting abominably. Your Romeo is superb. You've carried the audience along with you from start to finish. I hate myself for being a woman first and an actress afterward. But it will probably please you to know that what you said to me to-night has had a certain effect upon me. I've 'thought better of it,' as you predicted. I'll go to Philadelphia to-morrow, and if through you I lose my faith in him you will have the satisfaction of knowing that you have ruined everything you say you are trying to save—you have taken away all my desire to live and work, taken away my chance of success, my belief in everything good."

She spoke rapidly, without letting her eyes meet his. Her speech begun in proud disdain ended in trembling self-pity, and she turned away abruptly to hide her tears.

"You poor child," said the man compassionately, "I would die rather than give you pain."

The angry flash of the look she turned upon him dried her tears. "Have I not begged you before to keep your pity?" she asked.

He stood watching her as she made her way to her dressing-

room through the busy mob of scene-shifters. "Great heavens! how she hates me," he muttered, "and yet I meant to do her a good turn."

He went directly to his rooms that night without looking in at the club, got himself into a smoking-jacket and sat down before the fire, pipe in hand, his gaze bent upon the flames.

In his ordinary costume, bereft of his make-up, he showed for a man of thirty-five, graceful in bearing, his face stamped with the look which comes to the face of a man who has lived not always wisely nor well. Yet, in the deep lines of the mouth and the somber expression of the eyes, the charitable might have read a story of suffering which would have made it easy to forgive the sin.

He had always been such an unlucky dog, he told himself as he puffed at his pipe and watched the crackling flames, unlucky in his inherited weaknesses, unlucky in starting his life in the wrong environment, unlucky in his choice of friends, unlucky, he thought to himself with a mirthless smile, in having enough good in him to make him despise the evil.

He had been proud of the purity of his love for this girl who had come so suddenly to the front by reason of her talent and beauty. And because of it, because he wished to save her from certain unhappiness, he had broken through a thing of which he had been no less proud, his loyalty to the man who had been his friend until he had sacrificed their friendship as lightly as he sacrificed whatever stood between him and his own selfish ends. That was ten years ago, and the actor remembered with a kind of pride that during those ten years he had never let his own wrongs make any difference —he had never let his knowledge of the man's character stand between the man and his chance of success; that he, at least, had been true to the vow of eternal friendship which they had sworn as boys. Faithful for ten years, and then to be false because he loved a woman!

Well, at any rate he had done what he had tried to do. By this time to-morrow she would know that he had told her the truth. For once he had performed his duty unwaveringly. Surely a glow of satisfaction should follow such a conviction. But he felt none. On the contrary, as he thought of the scene in her dressing-room, he was a

little ashamed of his earnestness. Most things weren't worth the trouble he had taken after all. It was more sensible to drift with the current than to try to stop it. He thought he had gotten over the foolishness of trying to help people long ago. And, somehow, as he thought the matter over, it seemed a pretty shabby trick, giving a man away.

But it was to save her a broken heart.

Perhaps, but he had seen other women before now break their hearts for this man and had not interfered in their behalf.

Ah, but this one was different from the others.

And, being different, was it not possible that her love and loyalty might work the man's salvation?

He shook his head. He was skeptical concerning the influence a woman is able to exert in a man's reformation. He'd seen it fail too often. Yet had he any right to come in between the man and his chance?

Well, but there was the woman to be considered.

Yes, but would she thank him for saving her? What woman ever felt gratitude for having it proved to her that the feet of her idol were but common clay?

Well, no matter, he would save her.

And for what? For the satisfaction of knowing he had taken away her chance of success, her desire to live and work, her belief in everything good.

His thoughts went on in an antiphony of determination and doubt. But, through sophistries and arguments without end, he always found himself confronted at the last by the homely truth, the only code of honor to which he had been faithful heretofore, it was a pretty shabby trick to give a man away.

He knocked the ashes from his pipe and bent over the fire, hiding his face in his hands. There it was again, the strength that was in him battling with the weakness of a facile good nature which prompted him to do what was easiest for the moment, making him loth to hurt anyone even for a greater good. Better leave all that to fate. Why should he meddle with the ways of Providence?

The fire burned itself out, leaving only a winking little red eye among the gray ashes; the ticking of the clock on the mantel was very loud in the stillness; the sounds of the great city which never sleeps came to him from outside. He got

up slowly from his place, took up his hat and light overcoat and went out into the night.

A little later a telegram was flashing over the wires. "Brace up, old man. She is coming to see you to-morrow. For Heaven's sake, let her find you with the watch she gave you. I'll wire you the money in the morning in case you are hard up."

"What a poor fool I am!" he said to himself bitterly, as he stood once more by the ashes of his burnt-out fire.

# THE Place of a Skull: A Story of Student Life in Paris, by J. H. Donnelly*

LIKE most of the artists, we were too poor, or too distant from home, or too much tied down to unfinished work, to think of getting away for the holidays. Our lodging, cluttered with the usual paraphernalia of a studio, was in the big, roomy garret of a house in a court running off the Rue Soufflot. There, up among the chimney-pots of the Latin Quarter, we were all gathered that Christmas Eve,—all except Pietro Leone, whose advent we expected at any moment. The cannikin clinked, and the smoke of our pipes hung in a film over the room.

We were discussing the kinds of courage, just what constitutes cowardice, and whether men who are said not to know what fear is really, when you come to think of it, deserve much more credit than a poltroon. It was asserted that the measure of a man's courage must be the extent to which he comprehends the danger he deliberately chooses to face. If he be temperamentally devoid of the sense of fear, then there ought to be conceded to him not much more than the mere animal instinct for attack or defense.

"A vague horror of the charnel," Robinet was saying, "a dread of the inexplicable and of the supernatural, often unnerves men whose bravery is beyond question when they are

*Written for Short Stories.

confronted by tangible perils. Take, for instance," he continued, "a man like Pietro Leone——"

"Ah," interrupted Gustav, "you just spoke of the dead. You couldn't get Pietro to stay all night on the top floor of Saint-Croix for all the gold in La Monnaie!"

Our master, insisting that it is the sculptor's business to know every muscle and tendon and ligament, required his protégés to attend not merely the lectures on anatomy, but also to take the full courses in dissection. It was on this account that we were matriculated at the École d'Anatomie de Saint-Croix.

"Why should any one be afraid to do that?" asked Jacques, who was janitor and chief ghoul at Saint-Croix, besides being the husband of our concièrge, Madame Benoît. He understood our habits of life and thought so well, was, in short, so familiar with the student attitude of mind, that he was permitted, almost as though he were one of ourselves, to drop in at odd times for a pipe and a bowl.

Robinet shrugged his shoulders deprecatingly without finishing what he was about to say.

"What!" exclaimed Gustav, who could always be depended upon to keep things going, "alone, absolutely alone, in the moonlight and shadows, on the top floor, among the skulls and cadavers—why, he would leap from the window!"

Inevitably, as was the case with all our discussions, a wager was laid. Gruyère and Munich beer was the stake, to be furnished *ad libitum* by Madame Benoît. The stipulation was that if Pietro could be prevailed upon to pass the night alone in the dissecting-room of Saint-Croix, and should actually do so, then Gustav was to pay for the feast. Otherwise, that is, if Pietro should weaken or withdraw, the expense was to be ours. In this instance, everybody knew that the bet was made, not so much in a spirit of contentiousness, as in the hope that something exhilarating might come to pass. Suddenly Gustav filliped his cigarette across to the glowing grate. His eyes were big with an idea.

"And," he added, "I think I remember something I once saw when I was with my regiment in Algiers. We may get more in the way of sport out of this than the Gruyère and beer."

Just then we heard Pietro whistling in the court below. The door banged, and the mumbling of a few sleepy words of com-

plaint floated up from Madame Benoît as he passed her lair in the hall. The rickety stairs began to creak under his tread. When he entered, filling the frame of the garret door with his huge bulk, everybody pretended to be wrangling over the wager. Gustav remarked, sarcastically:

"It is useless to discuss the matter. I shall win. Pietro has not the nerve to do it."

Pietro, who stood blankly surveying the group, pricked up his ears.

Then we all jumped up, as if we had noticed him for the first time.

"Pietro, Pietro," we shouted, "why, how very lucky—we were just speaking of you. See, it is Pietro himself!"

This pleased and puzzled him—which was precisely our purpose. We kept up the dispute, dwelling upon the joy we would take in mulcting Gustav, if Pietro were made of the stuff we thought. We hinted that Pietro would not be likely to leave his friends in the lurch, especially when they had backed up with precious francs their opinion of his courage. The subject of the wager was definitely broached. A few questions were adroitly stage-whispered round as to whether he were not inclined to a belief in spooks—a suggestion that always touched him on a tender spot, a spur, as we well knew, that was more likely than any other to prick his pride. It was easy to perceive that he was already flushed with drink. He had a weakness that way, and Gustav did not fail to keep the glasses brimming full.

"Bah!" said Pietro at last, "any fool could do that. But it is so devilish cold——"

"That is nothing," observed Jaques, "I could easily make a fire."

"Besides," Robinet urged, "we will lock the mastiff in the hall at the bottom of the stairs. In case you should suspect any tricks, you will then know that nobody would dare disturb you."

"And," Gustav suggested, "Jaques can explain the matter to his friend the gendarme, who will be glad to keep an eye on the window in the course of his watch."

"Good!" said Pietro, "and you promise to let me out at daybreak?"

"Yes," we all promised, "we will be there before dawn."

"Then it is done!" he exclaimed, slapping the table.

Gustav, trying to slip away unobserved, was shuffling toward the door. Pietro, however, noticed him at the threshold, and demanded,

"Where are you going?"

Drawing his cloak about him, and pulling on his shapeless *feutre*, Gustav answered carelessly, as he disappeared down the stair pit,

"Good night. I wish you joy of your bed-fellows. I am going to pass the night in very different society."

"Let Murielle come with me," Pietro shouted after him, alluding to an affair of Gustav's with a girl who made paper flowers in a shop on the other side of the court, "she will liven up even the dead!"

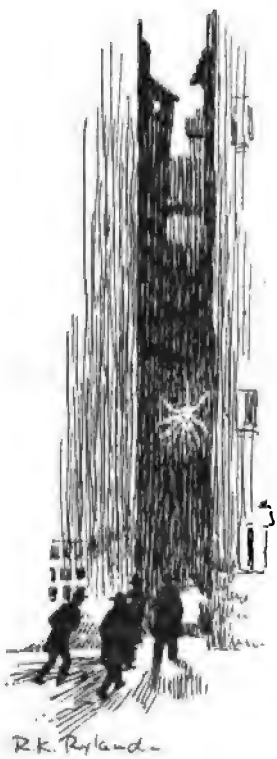
We were well aware, as they say, that Gustav had something up his sleeve. In order to cover his retreat, we closed the door, joined in the laugh, and slapped Pietro on the back. He steadied himself at the table, and then sank down in a chair, chuckling softly. The last sally about Murielle seemed to please him mightily. He drained another bottle to the dregs. In a few minutes, we had him started down the stairs. At the landing below, he left us for a moment, to go into the room which Gustav and he occupied beneath our garret. When he stumbled back to rejoin us, he was chuckling again, and cried out, as he crapulously waved his hand,

"Now we are ready. *Allons, à l'École* ——— "

He took Robinet by the arm. The others, having in mind Madame Benoît, formed a body-guard round Jaques her spouse, and we continued to crowd down the stairs, ignoring the protests of the astonished concièrge as we brushed past her into the clear, moonlit night. The mastiff was unleashed from her kennel in the court. Jaques slanted back at one end of the hypothenuse of taut rope to hold in the keen brute tugging at the other, and together they made a black triangle against the background of snow, as they led us off, eager for the sport at the École.

A few early carriages were rolling home from the theatres; now and then a group of blouse-muffled figures struggled along on their way to the midnight mass; here and there, from the windows of a room ruddy with the *bûche de Noël*, cosy gules fell aslant the snow; occasionally, where the dwellers were Germans, or Alsatians, perhaps, we caught a whiff of pine scent, and a glimpse of bespangled preparation for the morrow.

We made a great clatter as we trailed on, Pietro, ribald and hilarious, the others joining in with affected shouts of approbation. Once or twice, a watchman stepped out and gilded us with the flash of a bull's-eye. As we hurried by, Jaques had a word or two with his friend the gendarmé, and the latter whispered, "*Diable, c'est bon!*" A minute later, we turned into a steep and narrow passage that split like a crack among a pile of gloomy buildings. This was the Rue des Morts, "fanged with murderous stones." The brightness above, as if it shunned the place, silvered only the topmost eaves, and there was no light save where the flare of an evil-looking lamp, projecting from a corner of the solid masonry, made the darkness fitfully visible.




There was nothing inviting about the aspect of the École de Saint-Croix. It sagged, or seemed to sag, to one side, beetling out of the moonlight three or four stories above some smaller structures huddled against one of its walls. Its characteristic feature was the gullet-like archway with heavy doors that used to creak open with a crunch like a pair of jaws, gulping into the vault underneath many a scrap cast up by the Seine, or, it might be, a neatly divided mouthful trundled from La Roquette, or, likely as not, some morsel, "fashioned so slenderly," taken away in the dead of night from other places to be found without difficulty near certain of the boulevards. The entrance proper was at the foot of a flight of stone steps that wound up past windows lighting the landing places of the several stories.

The gendarme, without, might have noticed the windows wink one by one with the gleam of the lantern as Jaques lighted us up the stairs. The chill air smoked with our breaths when we stood on the mat of moonlight on the topmost landing. A deeply embrasured window was at right angles to the dissecting-room door, over which, by the way, was a large glass

transom. Robinet, perfectly well acquainted with the potentialities of Gustav's fertile brain, had, doubtless, some more or less definite inkling of what might be expected to happen. He, therefore, when we entered, kept us in the fore part of the room, where the moonlight was streaming through the windows. The front half of the roof was diaphanous with skylights, rendered only a little less translucent by the layer of snow. In the rear end of the room, where objects were not so distinctly visible, two rows of tables extended, forming an aisle between their ends. Tangled over the room was a network of gaspipes whence rings of burners depended, hooded with tin reflectors, not unlike the arrangement of lights that you sometimes see over a billiard table. Here and there, hooked up to the pipes, a partly dissected cadaver grinned out of the moonlight; the things were tinged with a luminous shimmer of green from the thick glass above as though, in this Golgotha, they were exuding a halo of visible decay. On some of the tables lay covered corpses, their rigorous death-lines accentuated by mort-cloths of canvas.

Robinet made a light and in a few minutes Jaques had a fire blazing in the big stove that stood in the front of the room. At an angle in the wall not far from the stove two chairs were arranged, in one of which, partly facing the door, Pietro tilted himself back, crossing his legs and sticking up his feet in the other. Having banked the fire for the night, Jaques put the transom stilt over the door, and then, with a disc of yellow light wavering round him on the floor as he swung his lantern ostentatiously about, he walked back as naturally as you please to inspect the rear end of the room. He was whistling a gay little love song of Provence, through whose melody a swift rush of associations somehow thrilled one suddenly, as with a pang, into the consciousness of other things—of life, of youth, of flowers nodding in the sunlight. We often heard him whistling that way in the vault below when about his ghoulish offices.

Presently he came back, winked at us knowingly, and said, with a note of double entendre,

"Everything is all right."

We gathered round Pietro, who hadn't the least idea we were juggling with him. The fresh air having steadied him a bit, we finished the last of the bottles that Robinet had thoughtfully brought along.

"Good night!" said Pietro, somewhat muddled, "*Dépêchez-vous*," he added, sleepily, "*dépêchez-vous*," and then, starting up, he warned Jaques,

"At daybreak, remember, or I will kick out the panels, and smash through the doors."

"At daybreak," we all reassured him.

At first, we thought he was listening to our footfalls retreating, but we had hardly gone a step or two, when we heard the creaking of the chair, as he settled himself for the night. As we descended after Jaques and the dipping lantern, corkscrew shadows of our legs sprang from our heels and wriggled backward up the stairs. At the bottom the mastiff was growling, but stopped when Jaques spoke to her. The door slammed after us, shattering the tomb-like silence of the Rue des Morts, and making the sweet midnight bells seem to jangle out of

tune, as, at that moment, from all the steeples in Paris burst the Christmas carillons and chimes.

Outside, we asked Jaques what he had found in the back of the room.

"Did I not tell you that everything is all right?" he answered. "Gustav took my master-key from its nail back of the door at home. He is hiding on one of the tables. As I passed he whispered, 'Within a quarter of an hour at the most.' "

"Now," said Robinet, "we must go back. Pietro has heard the door slam, and thinks we are gone. Gustav will not waste any time. Later the slightest jar of the door will disturb the mastiff. Already Pietro is probably in a doze. We can sneak upstairs, and listen outside the dissecting-room door."

This plan was carried out without further ado. Nor did we have long to wait. We heard a noise in the dissecting-room. I

got up on the window-sill and peeped under the transom. A distinct continuous tapping came from the rear of the room. Pietro started up in his chair, and its forelegs came down with a thump. He was awake and on the qui vive. The tapping ceased, and then began again louder than before. Pietro stood up.

Gustav, having draped himself in a sheet, was stretched out on a table. He arose and stepped into the aisle. Although I knew—or thought I knew—exactly what was going on, I nearly

fell off the sill. Slowly the figure stalked toward the front windows. Near the middle of the room it paused.

Pietro appeared to be very cool. He took a step forward, and folded his arms. There was a quaver in his voice, but what surprised us most of all, he said very sensibly.

"This is a trick. You have broken faith with me. Take off that cloth, and let me see who you are."

Gustav waded into the moonlight which wrinkled in a broad chevron athwart his sheeted figure.

And now a thing occurred that none of us had reckoned upon. We were so stiffened with fear that it was all over before we

could raise a warning cry. Something gleamed in Pietro's hand. He was, in fact, leveling a revolver at the spectre's head. He said with a Corsican oath,

"Another step, and *sangue di Dio*, I will shoot you dead!"

Gustav moved forward. Simultaneously came the crackle of half a dozen shots. The spits of blaze branded my eyes momentarily; then, in the thin haze of smoke, I could see the spectre, edged with green, full in the moonlight, standing in front of Pietro. No more horrible thing ever happened. The spectre uttered a gurgling laugh, and deliberately flung the bullets back in Pietro's face. We heard the patter of their fall on the floor beyond.

Pietro recoiled a step, half raised his arms, and crashed face downward to the floor. We broke through the door and rushed over to where he lay. The shock had been too much for him. He was stark dead.

* * * * * * * * * *

Anticipating that Pietro would take the revolver, Gustav, on his way down from the garret, had stepped into their room, abstracted the cartridges, and filled the chambers with blanks.

# THE Winning of Donna Lorraine: A Tale of Trinidad, by Basil Marnan*

HE is a very amiable gentleman," said the duenna, apologetically.

"*Un gentilhomme! Jamais!*" cried Donna Lorraine, with a contemptuous tilt of the chin, for to her the word had all the significance it would have carried in the days of Louis XIV.

"But," protested the duenna, "he is enormously wealthy. Consider, my little one, that his father possesses many restaurants in the capital of the beef-loving English."

"The son of a cook, then," retorted Lorraine, and, with a shrug of her dainty shoulders, her gaze moodily wandered away to the melting drowsy distances of the scene before her.

The view from the veranda where the girl stood was one of the sights of Trinidad. The bungalow rested cosily in the elbow of a range of hills, and was flanked on either side by gently sloping spurs, here somber with dark clumps of forest, here bright with the glistening leaves of the cacao-fields, and the mellow gleam of the ripening pods. In front, for some two hundred yards, lay a stretch of level sward, green with the soft lambent hue which only buffalo-grass can give. Almond trees, vanilla, the spreading bois-immortel, formed dusky glades on the lawn, lending a strangely breathless aspect to the banks of roses and tiger-lilies which here and there glowed and shivered in the blue haze of heat. By either side the garden gradually tapered away till the melting perspective gathered into a wide arch of towering bamboos, whose mighty polished canes, like the clustered columns of some titanic cathedral, seemed to brood instinct with solemn dreams above the velvety stillness of the loam beneath, drawing the quiver of the glare outside to the amber hush of their chancelled gloom.

*From Temple Bar.

Beyond the grove the sight dizzily followed the burnished glow of sand-flats through glittering avenues of cocoanut palms whose fern-like tops now listlessly drooped to the heat, now swayed and rustled in the wind; while in the distance the sea, like a girdle of sapphires, trembled round the islands that, green and tranquil, lay between the Bocas and Port-of-Spain.

Donna Lorraine, only child of Don Pablo Perreira, Portuguese grandee and insolvent planter, took in the beauties of the scene with resentful gaze. Despite the vexed frown, the petulance and moodiness of her eyes, the girl, as she stood there in a tight-fitting habit, impatiently toying with her whip, was unquestionably beautiful. Rather tall for her race, the subtle faultless contour of her form lent her an air of distinction which the proud poise of the head in no way seemed to impeach. She had the glowing liquid eyes of her native land, somewhat spoilt by a chilly gleam of arrogance, but withal black and deep and latent with fire as the glamour of a woodland pool beneath the starlight. About the coral curve of her lips was an almost cruel delicacy of firmness, which was not belied by the straight, over-sensitive nose, and the clear mold of the chin. Her face was startlingly pale, with that clear ivory pallor which is only found in tropical climates.

With all the passionate inconsistency of eighteen years, she was, at the moment, engaged in focussing on the shoulders of the man she had just been discussing her angry revolt against the cruelty of circumstances. To her it made no difference that Hector Ogilvie had waited three years for his interest before foreclosing on his mortgages; the fact only made the more aggressive the insult of the English intruder's wealth. Then, too, the three thousand acres of cane of which they had been dispossessed included the little bathing-cove which, for years, she had been accustomed to use; and in all Trinidad there was no spot like it for shade and seclusion. The fact piqued her temper the more, as the Englishman had that very day placed the cove at their disposal. The day had been insufferably hot, and between her disdainful refusal and her longing for the cool waters her pride was tuned to a fine discord.

The cold exclusiveness of his neighbors had roused in Hector Ogilvie, the English intruder, all the fighting spirit of the successful Saxon. From the first he had fallen hopelessly in love with Lorraine, but in spite of every effort he

made to tone down the natural awkwardness of their relations, he had been in possession for more than a month without gaining even the most frigid sign of recognition. Had he been, either in presence or estate, an insignificant person whom she could ignore, Donna Lorraine might have amused herself with his pretensions. But the girl's haughty spirit was far from chastened by the occult recognition that Ogilvie's personality irresistibly attracted her thoughts. Despite her will, she had been obliged to admit that he was good-looking, manly, aristocratic even. Large gray eyes, with a level disconcerting trick of appropriating fugitive glances; a nose that vied well with even Don Pablo's; a square, massive head, with close-cropped black hair; a well-rounded jaw and chin; a mouth prone to laughter, for all its ironic curve; a straight, lithe, slender figure—such was the memory whose insistence tantalized Donna Lorraine.

The girl's meditations were interrupted by the arrival of her father with the horses. The two were accustomed to silent intercourse, and as they rode along the velvety turf the Don found nothing strange in his daughter's sombre moodiness. As they reached the highway Lorraine's temper found pettish vent. The track was narrow, and a group of negroes stood in the center of it, talking. As they made no effort to let her pass the girl jerked her bridle, bringing her mustang's nose sharply against the shoulder of the nearest man; she emphasized the caution by a slight flip of her riding-switch.

In other and better times the act would have been regarded as a condescension, to be greeted with smiles. But of late the negroes had been getting unruly. The new generation, in the first flush of liberty, were particularly hostile against the old masters, whose manners, indeed, were hardly ingratiating. Señor Perreira had never accepted the spirit of the Emancipation Act; to him his laborers were just niggers, and most impudent slaves. His demeanor had been aggravated by the loss of his old estates, a fact which rather exasperated the temper of such laborers as still remained beneath his sway.

Lorraine's act found them in a nasty humor. The man, a stalwart fellow, turned at the blow, seized the Don's bridle, and, in the patois made for slaves and insults, demanded what right a beggarly Portuguese had to the road over a free British subject?

The old Don's yellow face assumed a coral tinge, and, for all answer, he lifted his whip and smote savagely at his aggressor's arm. In a moment a dozen machetes flashed in the sunlight, and a voice cried, "Death to the slave-baas! To the hills with them!"

Señor Perreira sharply reined in his horse, backing it to cover his daughter, his face suddenly gray and anxious. Lorraine sat unmoved, meeting her father's quick glance with a scornful smile, and a significant gesture toward the stiletto with which her saddle-bow was armed. The Don clubbed his riding-whip and edged Lorraine a little nearer the belt of impenetrable cocarite shrub which lay at their back. Next moment a knife whistled through the air and half severed the fore fetlock of his horse. With a shrill scream the horse staggered to its knees. The Don vaulted clear, and with uplifted crop rushed on the ruffian who had thrown the machete. Lorraine, sitting rigid, felt a sudden glow of pride in him. And, indeed, he made a strong enough picture, the western sun shining full on his lean, yellow face, his black eyes gleaming like half-burnt chips of coal, his wispy gray hair ruffled in the breeze, his stiff figure informed with the vigor and lancing directness of rage; and, opposite him, the malignant faces of the blacks, in the first impulse of slaves, shrinking from the onset of their master.

But their fear was only momentary. As the old man's crop felled his quarry half-a-dozen negroes flung themselves upon him and bore him to the ground.

Affairs were at this juncture when Ogilvie rode slowly along the road, returning from a shooting excursion in the bush. The urgency of the danger did not admit of argument; he clubbed his fowling-piece, and dug his spurs well home.

An active man may do a great deal of persuasion with the business end of a clubbed gun on heads a foot or so below the swing of his elbow. And for two minutes Hector Ogilvie argued with a lusty precision of premises which could leave no room for any doubt of his sincerity. At the end of that time, two men were lying quietly on the grassy road, several were crawling painfully toward the bush, and their fellows were scudding like deer up the wooded hill on the left.

The Don turned to his rescuer a face which betrayed a curious conflict between gratitude and annoyance. But long habit had polished his emotions to a mechanical courtesy

which was proof against any sense of embarrassment. The man had saved his life; such a debt had a sanctity which stilled all clamor of prejudice, and the old noble's manner as he thanked Ogilvie had a charm in it which that young man had never imagined it might possess.

But if he was flattered by the graciousness of the Don, Ogilvie found little cause for complacency in the cold civility of the daughter. He was not versed enough in feminine inconsistencies to realize that the girl's negligent, half-mocking show of indifference masked a tumult of very contrary emotions. It was, therefore, with a stubborn sense of resentment that he dryly refused the Don's invitation to dine, and with an ironical bow to Lorraine, who returned it in kind, he took his leave of the two, vowing bitterly to conquer a passion that exposed him to such humiliations.

"Look here, Señor Perreira," said Hector Ogilvie, "I will fight you for the bathing-cove and as much land round it as you think a fair equivalent of your estate here."

"You will fight me?" echoed Perreira, rising to his feet, his brows arched in surprise. "I fear I do not understand."

"I don't mean in person," Oglivie replied, with a smile. "But I will stake my white bull against that black one of yours, the estates to go to the winner."

The two men were sitting on the Don's veranda where Lorraine had brought her embroidery. Don Pablo had shown himself anything but prone to forget Ogilvie's service, and, to the marked disapproval of his daughter, had been very persistent in inviting the Englishman to his hacienda. Lorraine took her revenge with zest. Ogilvie's passion was too evident to escape her notice, and she laid herself out to torture him. But if she succeeded in reducing Ogilvie to alternate states of despair and delirious hope, she left untouched his quiet obstinacy of purpose. Beneath the girl's steely drilling, Ogilvie had for some weeks been learning to appreciate at its proper value the nature of that crust of pride, which, despite the old man's courtesy, held him aloof from the privileges he desired. He divined, shrewdly enough, the Don's covetousness for land, and all the ideas of caste implied in his mind by a titular right to its possession. To put himself on a level with their perspective, to remove from their minds the notion that he was there as a commercial usurper, was no easy task.

Then as, for the twentieth time the Donna had coldly refused his offer of the bathing-cove, the inspiration had come to him. The veriest tyro could have told him that between the Don's black champion and his own white bull there was but one issue possible. But to lose a few hundred acres in fair play, and at such disadvantage, would compel the Don, in self-defense, to regard him henceforth in that light of equality that he was painfully aware he did not at present enjoy.

He felt the girl's sudden flush and startled gaze, and the Don's quick scrutiny. But he stuck to his part with hard defiant eyes, and in cold tones repeated his offer.

"My white bull against your black!" he said, leaning forward and slowly blowing a wreath of smoke into the still air.

A most unholy fire of derision and exultation glowed for a second beneath the Don's yellow lids. He perceived at once the Englishman's little plan, and inwardly his soul trembled with a fear and a hope that he would not for worlds have revealed to his daughter.

"I accept the wager," said Perreira gravely.

The contest was fixed for the next day, and as Ogilvie departed, the Don and his daughter sat for a long time in silence.

"He is a wealthy youth, and brave, and has spirit," said Señor Perreira at last. His eyes were resting furtively on Lorraine, and his voice had a suspiciously tentative note. Lorraine, bending over her work, felt it, felt, too, with a sense of hot resentment, the sudden warmth of color that flushed her cheeks. The Don walked away, smothering a dry chuckle, and as the sound reached the girl, her hands suddenly tore in two the lace mantilla she was working, and with angry eyes she turned on her duenna, and crying, "How dare you look like that? I hate him, and his wealth, and everything about him!" fled to her room.

On the following afternoon Ogilvie stood with Perreira in the small veranda which overlooked the back of the Don's bungalow. Below them stretched a lengthy oblong sward, on three sides shut in by the house, on the fourth by stout palings of bamboo and cocarite. Almost at their feet the black bull stood, held at either side by two peons, its little red evil eyes fiercely twitching, its straining neck curved into an arch of knotted muscles as the ropes dragged its

nostrils close to its chest. Opposite, at the other end of the inclosure, Ogilvie's champion stood tossing its head, a beautiful creature, with open curved horns; its spotless hide, its tense muscular symmetry, exaggerating the contrast of its pigmy dimensions with the giant frame of its adversary.

The Don stroked his beard, hiding a smile. Ogilvie, catching sight of a certain fluttering at a window above them, turned, with cheeks slightly flushed, to his host.

"They only await your signal, Señor," he said.

With a hastily averted glance, the Don leaned forward and bade the men let go. Immediately the peons slipped the ropes and scurried over the barriers.

For a moment the two animals stood facing each other, tossing their heads, bellowing in the ecstasy of liberty and battle. Then, almost simultaneously, the shaggy fronts were lowered, the bellowings merged in one raucous mutter, and, cutting the turf with savage hoofs, the two brutes charged. The intervening space was short, and before they had attained great impetus, fair and square the two fronts dashed together. The white bull, thrown back like a ball, wheeled swiftly, and galloped to the barrier, there to turn, and with every muscle quivering to start again in a wild charge.

The Don's champion, versed in many a battle, had backed slowly, and as the other turned, stood with lowered crest and hoofs planted like steel pegs, waiting the onset. It came like a wave, and like a wave the white bull seemed to break and pass over the rocky front opposed to him, hurled, by its own impetus and the cunning twist of the knotted neck beneath, some feet beyond to the turf.

To the spectators the issue seemed to be an affair now determined, and Donna Lorraine, leaning, in her excitement, from her coign of seclusion, for a moment met the full, eager, pleased gaze of her suitor. Her eyes had sought him, in a spirit of exultant challenge, expecting to meet a face somber with the certainty of loss. The sight of his very evident gratification brought a pucker of perplexed wonder to her brow. Then in a flash she read its cause, and all his hidden design. Her face flamed a rosy red, and with a nervous jerk she closed the casement and drew the blinds.

At that moment the unexpected happened. The black bull, with a snort of expectant victory, had wheeled and charged on its fallen foe. Half dazed, the other struggled to

gather itself up; its front knees grinding the turf, its haunches indrawn to a tense rigidity, its muzzle flecking the green grass with a bloody froth, like a stone from a catapult it lanced upward and forward just as the goring horns of its adversary were rushing down upon it. For a moment the two seemed to poise together in the sultry air, then, with a crash, they fell, a quivering mass of pelting hoofs, till out of the wild frenzy they both reared again, and maddened now to blindness rushed front to front once more. But the Don's champion was reeling wildly, for in its last furious charge, the long, curved horn of the white bull had struck fair and full the onrushing chest, where still its broken edge protruded.

And now, before the two could reach each other again, the black bull staggered, rocked, floundered to its knees; its eyes glared around in an agony of pain and defiance; then its head smote the ground and a great red wave stained the turf as the dying brute's legs clawed at the darkening sunlight. Next moment the white bull, with head erect, was pawing the twitching body, making the hills echo with bellowings of triumph.

Don Pablo turned a gray face on his guest.

"Señor," he said, "it was a brave fight. It is, however, written that my star must go down before yours. My house and my lands are at your disposal. I ask you only time enough to remove my personal effects."

Words failed Ogilvie. He had, with the best intentions, done the Don about the worst turn a man could devise, and he knew that to treat the issue as anything but an assured fact would be counted to him for an irrevocable insult.

As the Don, with a grave "Adios," walked slowly into the house, Ogilvie bowed his head and followed his victorious bull out of the inclosure. He turned once to glance at the bungalow, only to avert his gaze uncomfortably; for the window was open again, and at it, serenely regarding the hills above his head, sat Lorraine, her impassive face showing a perfect oblivion of her misfortunes—and of himself.

For a moment he paused, but resisting the impulse, he shrugged his shoulders defiantly, turned his back on Lorraine, and softly cursing his luck, made his way homewards.

A brooding sky, heavy with langour of sleepy stars, a night of strange fragrances, of soft panting winds, of purple shadows cradled in a golden bloom of drowsy dreaming waves.

Beyond the Bocas, from their somber tree-clad ridges up to the glittering zenith, the Milky Way glowed and shivered, and through its midst of powdered pearls the amber crescent of the moon soared in a vesture of coral-hued cloud. Beneath the rush of light, the waters of the Gulf trembled into a sudden hush, and lay like a lake of carven lilies, beathless, expectant.

Toward the Bocas, a column of blackness stretched athwart the silver radiance, molding to an immense unity the clustering shadows of The Islands, whose mounted crags rose sullen and forbidding in the path of the moon, and fretted the saffron glow into a fairy lacework of rainbow-foam around their wooded shores.

The cluster of shadows ran like a straight path toward the little bay, where the watch-house of Don Pablo's late estate grayly gleamed in the distance. On the brim of the blackness, riding at anchor just beyond the gloom, the yacht Firefly lay, glistening in a shimmer of opalescent pallor, like a thing of dreams between worlds of shadow and light.

In a deck-chair on the yacht Hector Ogilvie was lying, following visions through the glamour of the water. To his left the islands rose in clear relief; one lying low and covered with trees, whose delicate feathery leaves gleamed like a silken shawl about the brown, brooding branches; the other, linked to it by a low spit of gray beach, high, precipitous, barren, with its flight of stone steps darkly defined in the face of the rock, and on its crest the dark outline of a bungalow that seemed to fall grotesquely away from one window in which the rosy light of a lamp melted against the darkness.

Many days had passed since Ogilvie had received from Señor Perreira the title-deeds of the estate he had so lucklessly won. Now, after three-weeks' silence, he had sought the Don and boldly demanded the right to woo his daughter. Certainly the Don had been unexpectedly kind, had even waived any right to make objections to Ogilvie's proposal to occupy, for the campaign, the adjacent island, had finally relegated the decision to Donna Lorraine herself. Ogilvie had not been extravagantly hopeful; he had, indeed, thought the Don might promise a little parental advice in his behalf; but he hastened to send off his crew to the mainland to bring over enough furniture to render the island bungalow habitable.

He was engaged somewhat moodily now in checking off his chances of success, and his mind, in the stress of a sudden hope, gently drowsed into visions.

At the same hour, in the room whose light shone out on the yacht, Don Pablo and his daughter were holding stormy conclave. For her parent held Donna Lorraine, in private, in vivid awe. Despite his show of arrogance to the world, the old noble had scant relish for that aloofness to which Donna Lorraine compelled him firmly to adhere; and certainly the Don would sooner have lost his front teeth than let his daughter know his real appreciation of the value of birth as against cash. It had therefore been with a finely discriminating air of diffidence that he ventured to broach to Lorraine the subject of Ogilvie's visit to him that afternoon.

"For myself," he concluded, with cunning touch, "I am an old man, and practically ruined. I offer, then, no command. I give you entire freedom."

The girl's face dropped, her cheeks and brow tingling with a hot blush. Don Pablo, watching her narrowly, was delighted. He rose and patted her cheek. "Carramba!" he said gleefully, "we shall yet build the old house again."

Lorraine turned as if she had been stung, and before her astonished parent had realized his error, she poured out on him all the eloquence of the scorn her own secret thoughts had for so long been storing against herself, and not waiting a reply she fled from the room.

For some time she paced up and down, divided between rage and tears, not knowing whether to hate most the presumption of her suitor, the treacherous response of her own emotions, or the intolerable delight of her father.

Suddenly into the silence of her rage her father's voice, sharp, excited, broke:

"Carramba! What do you here?"

Her door was ajar, and between her room and the other a curtain hung. She sprang to it, and with wide eyes peered round its edge, to fall back with clenched hands, a cry of horror dying in her throat; for within, in the grip of three men, her father was being bound hand and foot to his chair, and the men, garbed in the yellow dress of the convict isle which lay two miles nearer the Bocas, she recognized as the same ruffians who had been sentenced for their attack on the Don and herself two months before.

Rigid and breathless, she watched them finish their task and stand back.

"Ah," jeered the leader, "who's baas now, Portugee devil? Jose de niggah goen larn you dat. Derse a bewfel boat out der in de moonlight, an' only de yun bucra baas der. I'se goen dar, I an' de boys cut un droat, take de boat, go ri' 'way wid you an' de bewfel M'zelle. Ise de baas dis show, an' you goen be niggah, an' likkle M'zelle my ole wom'n."

Lorraine, with her head reeling, clung to the curtain. A cry, a gasp even, would mean discovery, failure. She was conscious of no fear for herself, none for her father. All perception seemed merged in one picture. From her window she could see Ogilvie's shadow outlined against the awning, alone on the deck—perhaps sleeping. Her imagination followed the long swift strokes of the men as they swam to the ship; she saw them climbing the side, approaching the sleeping form; with a shudder she came to herself, every nerve vibrant to forestall them, to save their unconscious victim. Her father's words, tuned to a measured purposeful distinctness, riveted her attention:

"You have me at your mercy," he said; "but my daughter took the boat half an hour ago to the yacht."

"All Portugee men are dam liars," retorted the leader. "Ise took de boat to de oder side de island. Ise goen find de M'zelle dis minit."

"Accursed slaves!" yelled the old man, "you shall kill me first." Then in Portuguese he added, "Fly, my child!"

As he spoke, he lifted himself, chair and all, and with a violent spring hurled himself on the little table where stood the lamp, dashing it to the ground, and plunging the room into sudden darkness.

On the instant Lorraine read his purpose. She flung a black cloak about her head and shoulders, and, with her heart beating in her throat, her hand clasping the haft of a dagger, she glided into the room, like a phantom skirted the walls, and before the convicts could recover from their confusion, she had gained the steps and was racing down them for the water.

A glance showed her that the skiff was gone. Before her rose the outlines of the yacht, white and spectral. She flung her mantle off and glided into the water. The distance seemed to grow as she advanced, though the ship was not more than a hundred yards from the shore. But she was a

strong swimmer, the water was deep and buoyant, and her skirt was light. Yet, despite her strength, there was a great singing in her ears, a blurred dizziness before her eyes, as she realized that her hands were groping at the side of the vessel. The touch of the cold iron electrified her, and in a few minutes she had climbed painfully to the accommodation-ladder, and, shoeless, dripping, trembling in every limb, stood leaning heavily against the side.

It was some seconds later that Hector Ogilvie, opening his eyes, lay staring in front of him in blank amazement at what he for a moment thought a continuation of his dreams; Lorraine stood before him, proud, defiant, repelling, but a very Naiad shrinking from the clinging of drenched robes, her hair, touched by the moonlight to a strangely liquid fire, hanging about her arms and waist, framing a face bent and flushed, her whole posture and expression eloquent of a shyness that thrilled his waking consciousness to masterful joy.

For with the sight of him, there had burst on the girl all the import of her action. Self-revelation flooded her with shame, and with all the rebellious emotions that turned the shame to sweetness. For a moment she stood abashed by the very completeness of her surrender; but her imperious temper ill-supported a sense of humility, and as Ogilvie sprang up and advanced towards her with hands outstretched and eyes alight with questions, she lifted her head and met his gaze proudly, defiantly.

"The convicts have escaped," she said. "They have bound my father, and they are coming here to murder you and seize the yacht. They stole the boat, so I had to swim."

"You have done this for me!" he stammered, taking her hand, and drawing her to him.

She resisted him gently, her eyes drooping. Then, with a glance half defiant still, she whispered, "I could not let you be killed."

Her smile intoxicated him, and he offered once more to draw her to him; but with a little nervous laugh she tried to thrust him away, and pointed shorewards.

Ogilvie's brows contracted. "Your father!" he cried. "I was forgetting."

"It is forgiven, Señor!" murmured a voice at his elbow.

The two started. There, at the companion, stood the Don, looking very lean and yellow and chilly, his white dripping

garb lending him a curious resemblance in the pallid light to a column of melting icicles.

"I cut my cords," he said, grimly, "and climbed down the cliff to the other island, and swam off. And now you had better get up steam, and warn the Governor of the Convict Island."

Then, as he noticed that Ogilvie's arm remained unreproved, and that Lorraine's hands seemed riveted in the clasp that held them, a fine, unrestrained smile lit his pinched face, and he added, dryly:

"If the Señor will be good enough to tell me where I may find the hospitality of a suit of his clothes, I will leave him to enjoy unembarrassed all the warmth of the moonshine."

# THE Mysterious Umbrella: The Story of a Strange Occurrence, by Aurélien Scholl. Translated from the French, by R. E. D.*

ONE may not believe in marvelous stories, and at the same time one feels none the less a certain fascination in listening to them. Serious-minded people often take pleasure in going to see a pantomime.

One night several people were dining in a room of a restaurant in the Rue Royale. One of their party, a civil engineer, arrived very late, but his face expressed unusual satisfaction.

"I hope you will pardon me," he said as he entered. "You were quite right to sit down to table, and I will endeavor to catch up with you. I will tell you presently why I kept you waiting."

When the coffee came on each one hazarded a more or less facetious question relative to his tardiness.

"Have you received an order for a six hundred-foot tower for the next exposition?"

"Indeed, I have not."

"Are you intrusted with the work on the canal for the Two Seas?"

"They have not done me the honor of thinking about me."

"You've got the contract for the aërial railway from the Arc de Triomphe to the Colonne de Juillet?"

"Nothing of the kind," replied the engineer. "I am happy, I breathe again, I have a lightened heart because I have just got rid of an umbrella that has haunted me for four years!"

*Translated for Short Stories.

"What do you mean?" exclaimed every one with one voice.

And, still out of breath, the engineer told us his story.

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"It was on February 29th, 18—, I had been to Grenelle to inspect an old quarry which a prominent brewer wished to buy and turn into cellars. I had to study the nature of the ground, the solidity of the props, the ventilating possibilities of the immense galleries. I came out at four o'clock in the afternoon in a pouring rain, and I had rather a long way before me. It was not yet quite dark. A few feet in front of me a woman was walking under a large umbrella. Was she young or old, dark or fair? It was of little consequence to me under the circumstances. She had an umbrella. That was all that interested me. I hastened my pace, but she glided along over the mud and the puddles, while each of my steps gave a splash. I joined her at last, and without any polite preamble,

"'Madame,' said I to her, 'I would like very much to hold your umbrella, because not only would I shield you from the wet, but I should have a little corner myself.'

"At the same instant I found the handle of the umbrella in my grasp, but simultaneously the woman had disappeared. I looked around in every direction, and saw nothing! If she had flown away I would at least have seen a flutter or a shadow. But she had left no trace either in earth or air!

"When I reached Grenelle, in default of a café, I entered a wine-shop to warm myself while awaiting a carriage or omnibus.

"'I would like to know,' said the fat lady seated at the desk, 'if anyone has met *her* to-day.'

"'Oh,' said an old woman who wore a cap, and who was knitting by the fire, 'it is the 29th of February. You may be sure she has not missed her walk.'

"'Who?' asked I.

"'Have you just come from the open country out there?'

"'Yes.'

"'Didn't you see a woman, or rather a shadow, pass by the quarry?'

"'No.'

"At these words the umbrella that I had placed in the

corner by the door was seized with a shiver and fell to the floor.

"'But who is this mysterious woman?'

"'It is Berthe Salbris, the daughter of an old doctor, who died long ago. She was desperately in love with a young man. One day he wanted to get married to someone else, and fearing opposition from poor Berthe, he asked her to meet him at nightfall in the plain near the quarry. She has never been seen since. Some say that she was asasssinated and that the murderer threw her body into a well; others that she threw herself in voluntarily. One thing is certain, that every four years, on the 29th of February, she traverses the plain on her way to the rendezvous, and her passing is always marked by some unusually strange incident, something queer, you know. It is as if she was determined not to be forgotten.'

"'If it had been anywhere else than in this shop with only the two women for audience, I would have shrugged my shoulders, but curiosity got the better of my skepticism.

"'Did you ever hear,' asked I, 'that in bad weather the phantom of Berthe Salbris sometimes lent its umbrella to a soaked pedestrian?'

" The wine-seller burst into a loud laugh.

"'I know nothing about it," replied the old woman, 'but there are some people who laugh and who won't always laugh.'

"At this I rose and went out, leaving the umbrella in the corner where I had placed it. What was my surprise on reaching home to find it in my dining room! It was wide open before the fire drying itself.

"'Marguerite,' said I to the servant, 'did someone come in during my absence?'

"'No, monsieur.'

"'Where did this umbrella come from?'

"'I don't know.'

" She looked perfectly bewildered. I seized the umbrella and cast it into the depths of a closet, which I double locked.

" The next morning when I came out I found the umbrella in the entry. It had placed itself in the rack between two canes.

"'It seems to be obstinate,' murmured I, 'but it isn't going to have the last word,' and as I reached for a cane the

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handle of the umbrella came into my grasp. I carried it with me with the intention of getting rid of it, even at the cost of a crime. When I got a little way from my door there came a sudden downpour of rain, and I thought to myself with a laugh,

"'Is it a barometer as well as an umbrella?'

"I was going to my lawyer's. I deposited the specter-umbrella in the entry, and the clerk showed me into the chief's office. After having discussed the business I had on hand I was making for the door when the lawyer called me back and said,

"'You are forgetting your umbrella. What possessed you,' he added, 'to stand it in your hat?'

"In fact, I perceived my hat on the carpet, and the umbrella was using it as a basin into which it was dripping. That was too much. I went out without a word and began to feel uneasy. What was I to do? Smash this ridiculous persecutor, and throw its pieces to the winds? But to begin with the thing did not belong to me, and who could say what vengeance it might have brought down on me, charged (as it evidently was) with a mission? What could I do, humble detainer of an umbrella from the other world?

"My nights became atrocious. If I succeeded in falling asleep for an instant the umbrella appeared to me with a bat's head and flapping wings. To what ruses have I not had recourse in order to rid myself of the persecutions of that accursed object! Once when a little beggar was holding out his hand to me,

"'Here,' said I, 'here is four cents, and besides I will make you a present of this umbrella.'

"'Thank you, monsieur,' cried he. But the umbrella slipped from his fingers. 'How heavy it is,' cried the little fellow, 'I could never carry it!' And as I hastened my steps I saw that the rubber catch had twisted itself around a button on the back of my coat, and that I was trailing the fatal thing like the tail of a kite.

"This misery lasted four years. I was counting on leap-year to put an end to it. February 29! To-day was February 29! I went to the plain of Grenelle at four o'clock in the afternoon. In the middle I thought I saw a shadow. I held out the umbrella, saying, 'Thank you, mademoiselle!' And the umbrella was gently drawn out of my hand and

disappeared! My hands were empty, and you see me again happy and light-hearted."

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Some days afterward, on meeting the engineer, I asked him for news of the umbrella.

"It has not reappeared," he told me, "but since I no longer possess it I miss it, I call to it, I search for it, I try to bring it back, and I am so bored without it!"

# IN Perfect Confidence: An Episode of To-day, by Madeline B. Blossom*

THE water cure at Reinerz had long borne its well-deserved reputation as a happy haven for all nervous invalids.

The absolute quiet of the little village, the beautiful scenery of the surrounding country, and the complete equipment of the sanitarium with its efficient staff of specialists seldom failed to inspire hope in the heart of the most despairing invalid.

A majority of the patients were Americans (a fact which the medical staff seemed to consider a matter of course), a number were Germans, and the rest that heterogeneous collection of nationalities so common to a European health resort, but usually found elsewhere only in the most cosmopolitan cities, or at the gaming tables of Monte Carlo and Monaco.

The attendance at the "cure "this year was larger than ever, although the average of extreme cases was small, but they included as varied an assortment of hypochondriacs as could be found anywhere on the continent.

The Herr Oberst von Falkenberg was there—that pompous old colonel with his eyeglass, his strut, and no apparent trouble to be alleviated unless, indeed, it might be his marvelous faculty for profanity.

He came every year with great regularity, and so did Madame Gautier-Sboga. She was supposed to be an exile from Russia, and to her more or less mystery was attached; no one really knew anything about her, so she moved under a halo of additional interest and was accredited with the ability to disclose any amount of awful secrets when the proper time should arrive.

*Written for Short Stories.

Among the patients so ill as to require private attendance was a wealthy American from New York. Like many of his countrymen Mr. Russell had been so long a slave to business life that over-strained nature at last gave way. Now he had come abroad, accompanied by his wife and daughter, to see if the wealth for which he had given the best part of his life, his strength and energy, could buy them back again.

His wife, although in some respects a very worldly woman, was nevertheless sincere in her affection for her husband, and devoted herself to him in his illness with a wholeheartedness which absorbed almost all of her attention, and left very little time for anything else.

Dorothy Russell represented to her mother the acme of all charm and beauty; bright, attractive, with an impulsiveness which told the warmth of her nature, she had nevertheless an independence of thought which showed very clearly the existence of no small self-reliance, and added to the strength of her personality.

The guests at the "Cure" dined in the middle of the day and had supper at night. One evening, in coming down a little late, Dorothy noticed, already seated opposite, a new arrival, a woman well past the prime of life, but still bearing traces of great beauty. The slight hauteur of her manner contrasted rather strongly with the expression of her eyes, an expression so sad, so lonely, that Dorothy felt a sudden, irresistible attraction, and a longing to know the woman whose face could compel such sympathy. As she took her seat the stranger murmured, "*guten Abend*," with a slight bow and that ready courtesy so customary in all Germany, and so charming to the traveler from other lands.

During several successive meals they exchanged the ordinary conventionalities, gradually branching off to broader, more interesting topics, and before long, not only had Dorothy succumbed to the singular charm of her new acquaintance, but Frau von Bendel found herself equally attracted by the originality and the winsomeness of the young American. As far as the disparity in years was concerned, it was a strange friendship, but nevertheless so real that it grew deeper and firmer as the weeks went on. Not only were they seen together constantly, but it became an understood thing that

on the days Frau von Bendel was not strong enough to come down-stairs Dorothy was to go to her room for a part of each afternoon.

It was well toward the end of October, and Frau von Bendel had been confined to her room for a week, that Dorothy appeared one afternoon at the usual hour, but not at all her sunny self, and with occasional lapses into a solemn silence, which showed very plainly that something was troubling her.

"*Was kümmert dich, mein Kind?*" asked Frau von Bendel, at last, "what troubles thee? Is the Herr Vater very ill?"

"No," she replied, "Papa is much better, but——"

There was another pause as Dorothy lapsed again into silence, broken at last by Frau von Bendel's saying quietly, "May I not share the trouble, dear child? It might relieve you to talk about it a little—if you can."

"Dear Frau von Bendel," said the girl, "you have the power which makes me feel that I could tell you anything. It is not right to bother you, but you are so kind, and I *am* troubled," and Dorothy wrinkled her pretty forehead as if she had been brought face to face with some knotty problem which refused to be solved.

"You see, last winter in New York, there was a man many years older than I, who wanted to marry me. I had the greatest respect for him, but none of the feeling I had imagined I would have for the man whose wife I might some day be, so I refused. Mamma was very angry with me, for he had an irreproachably high social standing and enormous wealth. She declared that no girl in her senses would refuse such an offer, and really seemed to feel so badly that after some persuasion I agreed to think it over again and give my final answer at the end of six months. The time will be up next week when I must give my decision. Mamma spoke to me about it last night; she hinted that Papa's business had been suffering lately, and that it would be the greatest relief to him in his illness to know that my future was well provided for. She said, too, that it would be a real grief to both of them if I let so rare an opportunity go by. Of course," said the girl nervously, "it is left to me to decide, but lately," her face softened as her color rose, "lately I have begun to feel that it is quite impossible."

"There is someone else, then," said Frau von Bendel quietly.

"Yes," said the girl, with a proud, tender look in her eyes, "there is someone else. Someone at home in America, but he is poor. Mamma does not know," she added quickly, "nobody else does—I have only known myself, a little while. I should hate to do anything which could distress Papa in any way, or grieve Mamma either, but," with sudden impetuosity, "how *can* I honestly consent?"

There was a moment's silence when Dorothy ceased speaking, and then the voice of the older woman was heard. "It would hardly be right for me to advise you differently after knowing how your mother feels, but I—I want to tell you a story, Dorothy"—the rich, low voice grew deeper and fuller —"the story of my own life."

With an air of anticipation the girl glanced quickly at her companion, then taking a seat by the side of the fire she contentedly prepared herself to listen.

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"I was the eldest of four daughters," said Frau von Bendel, "our girlhood was passed entirely on my father's estate, where we all lived for years in more or less reduced circumstances. We had few pleasures in those days, and I well remember the strictness of our régime and the constant effort to make both ends meet.

"The house itself, one of those old baronial structures with an air even more of gloom than of stateliness, had been a magnificent dwelling in its day, but the ravages of time, with our inability to keep the place in condition, became apparent even to my childish eyes at an early age. But I loved it in spite of that, for I knew nothing else.

The long corridors, the dismantled drawing-rooms and the lofty picture gallery, so empty of its former glories, formed a melancholy spectacle for anyone who knew the history of their past, who knew of their former splendors.

"The one possession of which we had cause to be proud was the great library, with its rare collection of books; that had at least escaped unharmed, and it was there I reveled.

"Not only did I inherit my father's taste for reading, but it was by him my youthful mind was first awakened, then guided through that sea of literature which was at once my delight and my despair. In this way I gained a certain

kind of education, yet up to the age of seventeen I had never been in a large city, and knew almost nothing of the world. It was during those days that my father's affairs became more straitened than ever. Land he had, to be sure, in abundance, but ready money, of which we had at no time a large amount—seemed scarcer than ever.

"About this time there came to our home an old friend of my father's college days, now a thorough man of the world, possessed of great wealth and equal social standing. He had come for a few days, but at the end of a week showed no signs of leaving. It was then that I noticed how he sought me out, and although I tried to persuade myself it was not so, before long it became too apparent for anyone to misconstrue. At the end of the second week he made a formal offer for my hand, and my parents, whose delight was manifest, gave a ready consent.

"The customary written contract was made out at once, for a betrothal in our country means far more than in yours, and I offered no serious objection when the marriage was thus arranged. I respected Herr von Bendel, and was I not absolutely heart free? Besides, my parents were in need of help, and they told me plainly that the opportunity was come for me to do what I could for them. My three younger sisters were also to be provided for, and this was the chance for me to show, by my dutiful obedience, the proper appreciation of all their care.

"So I consented, and was at once plunged into the preparations—simple as they were—for the wedding. Herr von Bendel would not hear of a long engagement; he was going to Italy for the winter and wanted to take me with him. The marriage was to take place within the month.

"The night of the ceremony came at last—it seems almost impossible to think so simple an affair could have seemed so wonderful to me then!

"With our own hands we draped the halls with laurel and put flowers in all the rooms; to us they assumed a festal appearance. Our guests were not many, some friends from estates near by, and a number of our own villagers. Too young, too inexperienced to realize what it meant, I moved about during the day the most unmoved in all the excitement around me. At least I thought I was, but when at the appointed time my father came to my door to say that

all was ready and they were waiting for me, I turned from the final glance in the mirror to find I was trembling from head to foot. I was passionately attached to my family, to my home, and with a sinking heart I seemed to realize at last that a few hours would separate me from both.

"Pale as death I descended the stairs, and most of what followed was to me a dream. Of the ceremony I remembered nothing but the face of the dear old pastor who had known me from my birth, and the tears in his eyes as he blessed me at the last, in broken tones.

"Among those who came to congratulate me was a man who had been, as a child, my most cherished companion and playmate. Five or six years my senior he had petted and protected me with all the affection of an elder child for a younger one, and in spite of the difference in our ages we had been inseparable until his college days. After his graduation he had traveled extensively for more than a year, and had just returned in time for my wedding.

"Glad as I was to see him I had no chance for more than a handshake until all the congratulations were over. Released at last, I hastily stepped into a small side room and sank into a chair to rest. Quite hidden by palms and flowers I thought no one would notice me for a moment, but hearing footsteps I looked up to see Rudolph Wiesener standing before me.

"'How nice it seems to have you home again, Rudolph,' I said. 'Surely it is more than a year since you went away, and now you've been to all those places we used to talk about and wonder if we should ever see.'

"'You will do rather more than wonder, now,' he replied, seating himself opposite me; 'I hear you are going to Italy almost immediately.'

"'Yes,' I said, the thought making my lips quiver in spite of me, 'but I don't believe I care to go as much as I thought I did, after all.'

"'It is so strange to think of you as married, Elsa,' he said slowly, 'it seems such a short time ago that we were children together—such a very short time since I went to college and traveled, yet I come home to find you a married woman.'

"'A married woman,' I echoed mechanically, wishing he would talk about anything else.

"'I remember,' he continued half dreamily, 'how I used to

call you my little sweetheart, and what a dream of mine it was that when I grew to be a man I should accomplish all sorts of wonderful things and then come home to give my laurels and my heart into your keeping for always.'

"There was a silence when he ceased for a moment, but in that time I learned the meaning of pain. I appreciated the force of what his words meant to me, and realized with a sudden despair that I had learned to know my own heart—too late. I loved Rudolph Wiesener with all the strength of my being, and the vows of my faith and obedience to another man had just been uttered.

" My first thought was to get away somewhere, to be alone with this trouble which had come to me, but I seemed to have no power to move. Spellbound I sat there, gazing only at Rudolph, who quickly noticed my silence and looked up to meet my eyes.

"I was an innocent girl, and he a man of the world, so it is no wonder that he saw at once what I strove to conceal.

"'Elsa,' he cried passionately, as he sprang to his feet. Then almost in a whisper, 'Elsa, forgive me! I never dreamed that you cared like this!'

"It is said that a drowning man sees years of his life pass through his mind in a second, so came to me the thought of my life as it might have been, as it now must be, and with a low cry of pain I buried my face in my hands. A quick movement and he was beside me, his face dangerously near mine as he murmured with an uncontrollable wild delight, 'You love me, Elsa, you really love me!'

"'Yes,' I said wearily, as I rose to my feet struggling for self-possession with a sense of loyalty to the man whose name I bore, 'Yes, I love you, but the knowledge has come to me so suddenly that I lost my self-control and betrayed the feeling I should never have shown you.'

"He walked abruptly away from me a few steps, and from the nervous working of his hands as they hung at his sides I could see what an effort he was making for self-control.

"'Rudolph,' I said sadly, 'it is our misfortune, not our fault, but as it is so I pray that I may never see you again —it is the only thing for me to wish. God bless you always, Rudolph,' and as I rose to my feet trembling, I held out my hand. 'Good-bye.'

"Turning quickly he gathered my hand into both of his and pressing it to his lips, he said, 'You are a noble woman, Elsa, do with me as you will.'

"Slowly he walked towards the door, but at the threshold turned, and quickly retracing his steps grasped my hand in his, pressing it again to his lips as he murmured brokenly, 'It is for always, beloved; good-bye.' Another second and he was gone.

Frau von Bendel paused. The silence which followed was broken only by the falling of a log in the open fireplace, which, as it broke, sent forth a sudden blaze of sparks to light up the room and the faces of the two women in the twilight. It showed in the older woman a glimpse of a deep emotion and a bit of heart-weariness strangely pathetic, while the face and attitude of the girl on the low seat by the fire depicted that intense and absorbed interest which is the best of all sympathy.

She could not break the silence, she found no words to utter, but sat gazing into the heart of the flame waiting with a tender consideration for the older woman to speak at will.

"I often think of myself as I was that night," said Frau von Bendel at last, "so young, so unhappy and alone—poor little girl!" she added with a pathetic sense of self-pity.

"In the first depth of my emotion," she continued, "I felt that I not only did not grant to my husband an ordinary regard, but in the suddenness and strength of my feeling for the other man, that I almost loathed him. Leave my home and go away with him I could not and would not, and I remember wondering vaguely what I should say to my father and mother. But with all a young girl's horror of a scene I yielded to my later thoughts, and amid the congratulations of all the assembled guests I left my father's house two hours from the time Rudolph and I had parted.

"It was not far to the town where we were to spend a night, but during the short railroad journey repeatedly came to me the consciousness that every moment was carrying me farther and farther away from my home, my people, and everything I held most dear. By my side was the husband I had so lately vowed to love and honor, yet not far away was another man for whom my heart yearned continually and found no hope nor solace.

"Thought after thought passed through my mind in rapid succession, but it was not until after we had reached the hotel that there came to me like a flash the idea of instant flight. With an older woman it would have been otherwise, but I was so young, and the impulse was a strong one.

"Writing a few hurried lines to Herr von Bendel, I laid them on the table, drew a thick veil over my face, slipped quietly from my room and left the house. Two hours' journey away, living in D———, was the nurse who had been with me during my childhood, who had fostered and petted me for so many years until at last she had married and gone away to a home of her own. To her I went in my trouble, and I alone can ever know how gladly she sheltered me, nor how tender was the help she gave in all that followed afterwards.

"I cannot begin to describe how keen were the criticisms I drew upon myself.

"I wrote, of course, to my parents, who came to me in amazement, at once. It was not until after two very stormy scenes that they realized how determined I was. My father's anger knew no bounds when he found that my decision was indeed irrevocable. He told me I had disgraced my family and my ancient name, and that while he lived I need never enter his house again. He had, like many Germans, a tremendous regard for the conventionalities and an equal horror of anything that went against them. His ideas on the subject were very strong. I had outraged them all, and had no further place in his affections.

"Herr von Bendel made no attempt to follow me or to see me again, and the letter he wrote the day after my flight was the only one I ever received from him. Hurt and bitter as he was, it seemed more because of what he called my lack of confidence in him than anything else. He made no change in his plans, but left for Italy at once, and had little trouble afterwards in getting the marriage annulled.

"The news of my marriage and the subsequent scandal, as it was termed, spread broadcast throughout the country, and in the quiet little town where I was, gossip concerning my name was so rife that even the well-laid plans of my old nurse could not conceal it from me.

"For the next six months I lived there in absolute quiet, tended with a loving care, to be sure, but with that exception alone and without a friend. An older woman would have

*felt* at least the criticism and dislike in all the people around her, but to a girl of seventeen it was cruelly sharp. Naturally proud, I shrank more than ever within myself.

'One day at the end of the half-year came a long impassioned letter from Rudolph. In it he said he still loved me intensely as he always should, and he asked me if my entire life was to be sacrificed to one mistake. After that the whole world seemed brighter for awhile. It made me inexpressibly happy to be assured that he still cared for me so much.

"How gladly would I have written him to come to me at once! How gladly have told him that I longed for him every day with an ever-increasing longing, but I dared not do it.

"I felt my position so keenly. The wretched mistake of my marriage was so recent, my remorse for the injustice done my former husband still so deep that I felt I could not bear to even think of marrying for a long time. 'The letter I wrote cost me many tears,' said the older woman sadly, 'but it was sent at last.'

"He did not write again, and soon I heard he had gone to England.

"Then followed a succession of weary months, each one like the other, hopelessly dull and uneventful. No notice from my family, and a barely tolerant one from my neighbors. 'When I look back on that time,' exclaimed Frau von Bendel impetuously, 'I really wonder that I did not break down utterly. I dared not look back, I could not look forward, and the love in my heart seemed ever to increase with the sense of my own loneliness. More and more did I cherish the thought of the man who had made the greatest happiness of my life, and also its deepest sorrow.'

"After some time I heard of Rudolph in connection with literary work, and you can imagine how I scanned the papers in search of any items about him or for any criticism of his writing. At last I read of the novel he had written, which was considered very clever. I need not tell you how I rejoined nor what a proud sense of ownership I felt in his success.

"The copy of the book I sent for was absolutely worn with frequent reading, for in studying the thoughts of the man who absorbed my whole heart it seemed for the time as if the strength of my feeling must force his thoughts to me, must form some sort of magnetic current between us.

"The criticisms of his work and of more that followed afterwards were encouraging as well as favorable, and decidedly classed him among the most promising of the younger writers.

"About two years after my unhappy marriage I saw by the paper that Herr Rudolph Weisener had returned to Germany, but was lying dangerously ill at the hospital in Berlin. Almost stunned by the news, I realized that if he died it would be without one word from me. He had given me all the love of his heart, and I had sent him from me—now he was ill, perhaps dying. Unable to bear the anguish of uncertainty, I decided that I must see him, come what might, and started at once for the city.

"The trip was a long one, and beset as I was by sorrow and fear it seemed to have no end. All through the long night and the morning that followed I sat in the corner of the railroad carriage half dazed, only moving when the utter weariness of my limbs kept so long in one position would recall me to the present. I could not sleep, nor did a morsel pass my lips. The great fear that he might die before I could reach him seemed to have stunned all my sensibilities and overshadowed my joy at the thought of seeing him again. He might die without hearing from my own lips how dearly I loved him still, without knowing that my self-imposed penance was over and I was free at last!

"The long night drew slowly to a close, the morning followed, and when the train finally drew into the depot at Berlin I was well-nigh spent with fatigue and anxiety. But filled with a feverish unrest I was ever impelled onward by the one thought in my mind, and when I finally stood on the steps of the hospital it was almost with a sense of faintness that I realized the much-longed-for moment had come at last. After those many dreary months I would see him, would hear his voice again, and in the joy of being together we would teach one another to forget all the suffering in the past.

"The matron of the hospital came to me at once, and on hearing my errand regretted extremely that I could not see Herr Wiesener. On account of his weakness the doctor would permit no one to see him, 'except of course,' she said with a sympathetic smile, 'Fraülein Hegner, his betrothed.' 'And then,' said the older woman slowly—there was a great weariness in her voice as she spoke—'then I turned from the door—and came away.'"

As she finished Dorothy turned impulsively, and before Frau von Bendel realized it, was kneeling beside her.

"How cruel!" she cried, "how cruel it was!" and burying her face in the older woman's lap she sobbed aloud.

"Nay, little one, do not cry so bitterly," said the woman with a rare tenderness, as she stroked the bowed head on her knee, "it happened so many years ago, do not cry. I have told you this," she said soothingly, "because I have grown to love you, and because I want your life to be a happier one than mine. You are young and it all lies before you. Do not let any obstacle come between you and the one to whom you have given your heart. Love is the noblest and purest thing in the world, the sweetest and the best. It lives forever and outlives all else—do not turn it from you," she said, and the deep voice trembled, then broke down utterly. "Do not turn it away, it is the sweetest and the best." And as she soothed the kneeling girl she looked with eyes that saw not, that were wet with sudden tears.

* * * * * * * * * *

It was one afternoon in the following spring that Dorothy Russell was seated in her mother's private parlor busily talking. By her side was a well-built, vigorous looking fellow about five years her senior, who regarded her with an air of deepest content.

"So you see, Harold," she was saying, "I call her our guardian angel. It was owing to her that I decided to brave all opposition and to stand out against Mamma. It was rather awful last winter," she said with a sigh, "and in fact all the time until your letter came. Who would have ever thought of your getting that position, you clever boy!" and she laughed aloud for very joy and pride.

"Frau von Bendel has won my eternal gratitude," said Harold; "I feel as if I could never thank her enough."

"She has spoken so often of wanting to meet you, and I promised to bring you with me the very day you arrived," said Dorothy with an air of pride and a blush that was most becoming. "I think I'd better go up now and find out if she can see you this afternoon. You wait for me here," she added, "I'll be back in a minute."

Dorothy left the room happy and eager to tell Frau von Bendel the good news of Harold's arrival. The older woman

had ever given to the girl that quick appreciation and ready sympathy which awakens such affectionate response, and it was to her she now turned in her joy.

She walked through the long corridor past the rows of closed doors, crossed the passage which separated their side of the house from the other, then turned in the direction of Frau von Bendel's room. This was situated a bit higher than the level of the floor, and was entered by a short flight of four steps. Dorothy had almost come to them when the door was suddenly opened and the nurse came out. As she turned and saw the girl a sudden queer expression came into her face and was as soon subdued. "I wouldn't go in there now, Miss Russell," she said quietly; "I don't believe you'd better."

"Why not?" asked the girl quickly, "you know Frau von Bendel expects me."

Before the nurse could reply the bedroom door opened again, and Dorothy looked up to see one of the older physicians and the man in whose especial care Frau von Bendel had been placed. As he gently closed the door behind him he recognized Dorothy; at the same time something in his face startled her, and springing towards him she grasped him by the arm.

"Herr Doctor," she cried, "what is the matter? I know by your face that something has happened, ah, tell me what it is!"

"You cannot go in to-day," said the doctor gently, "not to-day."

"But she is ill, she is suffering," cried the girl, sharply. "I must go to her," and the hand that grasped his arm tightened like a vice. "I must go to her," she repeated pitifully, as she stared up at him with great frightened eyes, "I must go!"

"No," said the kindly old man, as he drew her away from the door with a gentle firmness, "you cannot go in to-day, but do not grieve, mein Fraülein," he added quietly, "you should rather rejoice with her, for she is in pain no longer —she will never suffer now."

# PICNICKERS: A Humorous Sketch, by Eugène Fourrier. Translated from the French by Suzanne Thorburn*

ALL the year round, but particularly in summer, Dinard boasts itself of an extensive colony of English families who come to settle down there for a time on the Breton coast to take the sea baths and contemplate the beauties of the ocean. Of course, besides these strangers quantities of French come too, and the children of the two nations unite to amuse themselves, but the English invent the forms of amusement.

During the season of which I am about to speak, the French de Dufrevilles, Laribois and de Pegroles were most intimate with the English Brahsons, Maxfords and Vyltons. Into this charmed circle several young men were admitted, among them a young poet just gaining renown, who came every season to Saint-Enogat, and several officers from the neighboring barracks. Every day some new diversion was planned, such as a fishing party one day, tennis the next, sailing, excursions into the country round about, and when the weather permitted of no roaming, a tea first at one house and then at another, filled up the season.

In order to vary the monotony Petrus, the poet, had suggested a picnic on the beach, a proposition which was accepted with unanimity.

Each person invited was to bring some one dish, and it was to be kept a grand secret what it was going to be, the surprise that was to follow its production being the principal attraction of this "al fresco" feast. Each housekeeper was racking her brain to think of something out of the ordinary, and the picnic promised some delicious culinary surprises.

*Translated for Short Stories.

The evening before the momentous event, the poet called at the home of the Countess de Dufreville.

"I have come to bid you good-bye," said he, "and to tell you, to my great regret, that I shall not be able to join you on the picnic; unfortunately I must go away this evening."

"That is really too bad," cried the Countess. "Must you really go to-night?"

"Yes, important business interests call me to Paris."

"And you cannot be with us, you who originated the picnic!"

"I regret it exceedingly, but it will be impossible for me to be there!"

"We had counted on you for a culinary poem."

"Ah, I shall furnish my surprise all the same," said the poet, laughing. "But I'm sure you are going to take the most delicious dish, do tell me what it will be."

"Oh, I don't dare tell."

"Even though I am going away?"

"That's true; you'll keep my secret, won't you?"

"I swear it."

"Well, I am going to take a superb pheasant which my husband sent me."

"A pheasant, that's too bad!" cried the poet; "don't take that."

"Why not?"

"Oh, because I have just come from Madame Laribois and that is what she is going to take."

"Really?"

"Alas, yes."

"What an annoying coincidence!"

"You'll have to change your dish," went on Petrus, "two pheasants would be too much of a good thing, besides so wanting in originality."

"Without doubt! What shall I do?"

"Would you permit me to advise you?"

"With pleasure."

"Well, substitute a tiny roast pig for the pheasant."

"Good! that's a splendid idea."

"No one else will think of it."

"That seems very probable."

"And your dish will, at least, have the merit of not being platitudinal."

"You have saved my life," said the Countess, jokingly, "not every poet has so much ingenuity."

"You flatter me," answered Petrus modestly.

"I thank you a thousand times," cried his hostess.

"You are too good, don't mention it," said the poet, bowing himself out of the room.

Walking rapidly down the street he soon found himself at the house of Madame Laribois, wife of the rich banker.

"Madame," he said, "I have come to bid you good-bye."

"Are you going away?" demanded Madame Laribois.

"Yes, for a little while on important business."

"Why, that is too bad."

"What causes me the most regret is that I cannot go to the picnic we had planned."

"Your idea, too! Cannot you put off your departure a few days?"

"Impossible; however, I hope the picnic will be a great success. It seems all the ladies are trying to surpass each other with their culinary efforts. As I am going to be absent, do tell me what good thing you are going to take to the picnic?"

"I'd love to gratify your curiosity, and I will if you promise not to breathe it to a soul."

"I will be as silent as the tomb," responded the poet gravely.

"I count on your discretion, then," said Madame Laribois, lowering her voice. "I am going to take a lark pie."

"What a fortunate thing it was then that I came here," cried the poet. "Why, that is what the Countess of Dufreville is going to take; she just told me so a minute ago."

"Oh, dear! What a shame; things like this are always happening to me!"

"Happily I came to warn you in time, you can change your dish."

"Yes, but what shall I take?"

"Would you let me advise you?"

"Yes, please do."

"You know at a picnic it is most important, if possible for each one to take a different dish, and I think I have found one of which no one else will think!"

"Tell me, tell me; I am dying to know what it is!"

"Take a little roast pig."

"Bravo! that is an excellent suggestion."

"I give it to you for what it is worth."

"Why, it's worth its weight in gold!"

"Never, perish the thought," cried the poet, casting down his eyes as he bowed himself out, overwhelmed by Madame Laribois' thanks.

His next visit was to Mrs. Brahson, wife of a retired English colonel of the Horse Guards.

"As I have to go to Paris to-night, I have come to bid you good-bye," began the poet.

"Oh," said Mrs. Brahson, whose French, if not broken was decidedly fractured, "you are going to leave before the picnic, that is very unkind of you."

"But believe me, dear madame, no one can regret it more than I."

"Oh, yes, *I* do."

"Thanks, but do tell me, I am all curiosity, what dish are you going to take?"

"But it is forbidden to tell, you know."

"Oh, yes, to the others, but then you see I am going away."

"Are you surely going?"

"This evening."

"Very well, I intend to take a plum-pudding."

"Oh, don't take that," cried the poet.

"Why not, may I ask?"

"Because that is going to be Madame Laribois' dish."

"Oh, really; what shall I do?"

"Well, you know, two plum-puddings would be rather too much, to say the least of it."

"That's true, but I am at my wits' end to think of another dish."

"Will you let me help you out of this complication?"

"Oh, would you?"

"With the greatest pleasure. You want to take a dish of which no one else has thought?"

"Yes, indeed; that's exactly what I want."

"Well, take a little roast pig."

"Wouldn't that be rather out of place at a lunch?"

"Not at all; anything 'goes' at a picnic, which to say the least is an unceremonious meal."

"All right, I'll take a pig, and I'm awfully much obliged to you for the suggestion."

"Don't mention it, I am always glad to be of service to my friends," and he left, going to the other guests of the picnic in turn to bid them good-bye.

The spot chosen for the picnic was six miles from Saint Enogat, and promptly at the appointed hour all the guests arrived, and soon were seated on the grass, while the servants with great secrecy went to bring the mysterious dish each housekeeper had brought to the lunch.

"Now let the feast appear!" called out Lord Vylton, dramatically.

Then came a procession of servants—first the butler of the Countess, bearing a roast pig, then Madame Laribois' man carrying a roast pig, then another servant and a pig, then another and another with baby porkers, until everyone's servant had filed by with a tiny roast pig on a platter. A perfect scream of laughter followed a moment of stupefaction.

"Nothing to eat but these horrid little beasts," cried Mrs. Brahson.

And as if from one man arose a cry of "Oh, if we only had Petrus here!"

# THE Story of Orson:

## A Barbarian's Love Story, by Samuel Millard Porter*

ARTUFF my kinsman, had come to the fields where I worked, sowing, and although I had no great love for him, he still seemed to stay with me more than the others, but I knowing of his tale-bearing with others of my kinsmen always answered him as little as I dare, which seemed to anger him; so this day when he had questioned me and received the short answers I always gave him, a rage seemed to come over him, and drawing his knife, he taunted me, and saying things no man had ever said to me, he rushed upon and struck at me. Now, although I am not given to anger, yet what he said wrought upon me so that I turned upon him after he had thrust at me, and though I was wounded, I took from his hand the knife and slew him. Then it was that I saw what I had done in my anger, and kneeling down beside him swore that no man should ever be slain by me again, and taking him like a child in my arms, I ran with him to the house and called my brothers, who seeing Artuff dead upon the ground looked black at me, for no love had been lost on their part since my father in his old age had given me the house and fields.

So saying little to me they bore Artuff on a litter between them to the house of Artuff, his father, where, after mourning with his people, they came back again, and though I had told them how Artuff had first thrust at me, yet would they not believe it, but chose to show ill-will.

So it came that one day in harvest time when we were all in the fields long after this thing was, we heard someone crying out as though in rage or pain, and we looked to the

*Written for Short Stories.

west and beheld Orloff running. Now, though Orloff had not been friendly with me since I slew in anger his brother Artuff, yet I also ran to hear him, but at seeing me a very Bersekir rage seemed to come over him, and with a cry he aimed with his sword to slay me. Now, though I am as brave as any man, still did I not like to have any more slaying in our kinship, so leaping over a mound of earth I made ready to go to the cave if he should chance to pursue me.

And now it was that some sought to stay him to hear what had caused this anger, so that I could plainly hear him say from where I was waiting, "'Tis a vow I have made to Artuff, my father, to slay him who slew my brother in his youth," and he spake so bravely out before them because he knew that anger was in the others' hearts in that I had the fields of my father and was the nearest to his heart, so breaking away from the hands that did not detain him he ran after me, for by this time the kinsmen of Orloff had come up; so over the mounds of earth I went, and he followed me. When I reached the hill I rested for a breath, and jumping down over the cliff seemed to his eyes to have fallen through the earth. But Michele, my wife, I know not whether through deceit or otherwise, cried out, "He has gone to the cave," which Orloff and the others hearing, he descended by another way and stood at the mouth taunting me.

Now, when I had been building the cave, I had thought of the ill-feeling of my kinsmen, and had taken from one of the walls a stone, and often when they had thought me in the woods hunting I had worked at the passage underground, but though I could do so at times, still surely they would see me if they were reaping in the fields, so I had worked from the woods twenty steps away, and by dragging my sword idly across the field one day, had made a straight line to the cave; so, slowly though I worked, still by the time the harvest was ready again, I had made the passageway and no one but I knew of it.

So it was, though Orloff had thought I had hidden in the cave; still when he had entered he would see no way by which I could hide, for I had pulled up the stone after me, and by the time I was out in the woods Orloff was searching the cave, and so gave me time to run with swiftness through the dense, damp marsh of the woods near the field, and running with great swiftness I came near nightfall to the hut of

Edmund, and looking within to see if any were there, I saw the maiden Alicia, and knowing that her gentleness was my safety, I opened the door and told her of my flight and the deceit of my kinsmen and the ill-will of my wife.

Then with weeping eyes she bowed her head for a time, and with whitened face she told me that her two brothers had gone that day with Orloff, and though she had sought to stay them, yet had their fear of Orloff prevailed upon them to go. And this was the Edmund I had saved from the wild boar last harvest. Then in a very rage at the life which had given me the power of suffering so, I swore that when the sun went down I would slay myself. But Alicia, laying her gentle arm around my neck, sought to calm me, saying that all would be well in time and that she would show me the way out of the woods, and that I could go far away and need never think of them again, and although it was more to my mind to slay myself, I hearkened to her, and when she had pressed me to eat of the cakes she had baked and to drink some cow's milk, and tied up a little of the cake for my journey, she led me out of the hut into the woods, where in the distance we seemed to hear faint cries. Alicia listened with face whiter than the snow, and then grasping my hand she ran with me to the brook, and leaping across it we ran and soon reached a cave, where, pulling away the stone, Alicia bade me to enter, but not knowing where it led to, and fearing to leave her to the anger of Orloff, I would not unless she went with me; so replacing the stone we ran as quickly as we might to the mouth of it, and then through the woods until we came to the river, where near a clump of bushes she pulled from under the leaves the boat of her brothers, then telling me that she must leave me there and run to the hut, she stood over on the bank, but I besought her to go with me to my kinsmen down the river, where they would surely care for her. Shaking her head, she said nay; that if she went her brothers would surely follow and there would be more blood shed, besides they would surely know then that she had helped me. Coming down to the boat she gave me her hand to bid me farewell, which, seizing, I covered with kisses and thanked her for saving my life and also from the sin of bloodshed. Pulling her hand away she stood at the bank of the river, and I pulled out with a strong stroke down the current, not knowing which way to go yet, but thinking at last of the kinsman of

my mother for whom I was named and of his goodness to me in my childhood, I pulled my boat around, and bending to the oars soon swept out beyond the bend of the river, and thus left far behind me forever the home where I had never known of happiness since the day when Ursula, my mother, had died.

Now, when I had reached my kinsman's house and had told them of the way in which I had to flee, they became angered, for they said surely punishment would come to those who so wronged their own flesh and blood; nor, though I had at first not thought it manly to tell, were they less angered at my wife's betrayal of me; for though I did not love my wife, still I would not have exposed her to their wild anger until they told me of her visit to Artuff, the father of Orloff, and of Orloff's love for her. Then in a rage I had told them of her crying out "He has gone to the cave."

But when they had heard of Alicia, the maiden who had helped me, they swore no harm should ever come to her for her kindness that day to one who was so cruelly pursued by those of his own blood, who, knowing of my oath not to kill again, even though it should be to save my life, had no fear of me. So now I worked and waited with my kinsmen, for surely did we know that my brothers would seek to slay me if they thought me still alive; and waiting, I still thought of Alicia, and when sowing time came round I could wait no longer, for though I had not so much fear of her brothers, still I knew if my wife should know that I had been helped by Alicia, her bitterness would cause her to tell Orloff and his anger would be great against her.

So taking up my staff and sword one day, which I had no thought of using save to stun anyone who should strive to slay me, I went up the river to where I had started out that day last harvest. When I got to the bend of the river I saw through the bushes a moving figure, but so bent was I on my errand I cared not if it was Orloff himself, and pushed on with all my strength until coming to the shore I leaped upon it, and carrying the boat farther up the bank than it had been kept before, I covered it with bushes and went into the woods.

It was now near sunset, and though I had the fear of the wild beasts for the night, I cared not, for only against the slaying of men had my vow been taken. I felt no fear of

anything, only the fear that some day anger would cause me to break my vow. So I ran, until by the time the moon rose I had reached the hut in the woods, and within it sat Alicia and her brother Edmund, whom I had saved from the wild boar. Opening the door I entered, and seeing me Alicia gave a great cry. But Edmund never moved from the spot where he stood, until going up to him I laid my hand on his shoulder and bade him remember my love for him when he was a child. Then breaking into sobs he asked my forgiveness for the harm he had sought to do me. Forgiving him, I asked him of my brothers, and then with bowed head he told me how, telling my father on his sick bed that I had been slain in the woods, he had died of a broken heart, and that my wife had claimed for her own the fields and house, to which my brothers had pretended to agree. Now Orloff, when he had heard of my wife owning the fields, had asked her to marry him, and my brothers, fearing Orloff would also claim the fields, they had caused her death and Orloff's.

And then, looking at Alicia with my heart in my eyes, I took her in my arms and pressed her tight against my breast, for Edmund I knew was my friend.

# MRS. Gale's Garding:

## A Tale of Rural England. By Evelyn E. Rynd*

"NOW there's a garding as you could grow hanythink in," said old Mrs. Gale, looking with affectionate pride at the strip of ground which, parallel with twenty other strips, ran from her back door to the river.

"Then it's a pity you don' grow somethink," said her next-door neighbor.

The remark so deeply afflicted old Mrs. Gale that, after gazing through tear-blinded eyes at the garden for a moment in strained silence, she retired indoors to weep and pray.

"Of course I knows it ain't done ser well as it might lately, what with the cats an' the boys an' the stones, an' the paths a-gettin' mixed up with the beds in the puzzlin' way they 'as done," she explained amid tears to the next-door neighbor's wife, who drifted in shortly afterwards to "borrer a pinch er tea." "But a thing don' hallways stop what it is, an' it's bes' not to name nothink till you sees what 'ill 'apping to it. I've put it to your 'usbing mild-like again an' again, which it's me wish to be kind to the most tryin', 'owever set in their notions. 'It 'ill look up wonerful in the spring,' ses I to 'im, an' so it must do with the way I've prayed about it."

"It *may* do, of course," said the neighbor's wife. She was clasping one baby sideways under her arm, and another staggered at her feet. "I 'ad to bring Tommy alonger," she explained anent this last, "because of 'is 'obby. What I ses is, if 'e mus' turn roun' somethink, it 'ud better be 'is mother than the hash-'eap or the pig-buckit."

Tommy was a child of character. He walked swiftly and hopefully around his mother's skirts in a way that should

*From Country Life.

have made him extremely giddy, but did not seem to do so. Every now and again she kicked out a vague foot at him, and said parenthetically, "You-stop-a-turnin'-Tommy-or-I'll-slap-yer!" But Tommy turned diligently on, apparently in the earnest expectation of some day arriving somewhere where it would be worth his while to remain.

"Surprisin' things does 'apping, even with prayer," said Mrs. Bings, rubbing her mouth, "though of course with that you don' never know quite where you hare, nor meant to, for fear of leavin' orf through seein' the uselessness of it. Which the garding's hall path jus' now, so to speak, but there's one thing: in a garding hall path you can walk hanywhere you please. Take that to your comfort, Mrs. Gale."

"You couldn't never tell what mightn't grow there with a little keerful diggin'," said Mrs. Gale, sobbing. "You couldn't reelly tell what mightn't grow there with no diggin' at all. 'Ow does your 'usbing know what there mayn't be in the way of rootsis? It's not hall as shows above ground as is growin'."

"I'm sure Bings's the kind of man no one need think of twice," said Mrs. Bings. "I never. The way I manidges to forget 'im surprisis 'im horften when a 'opin' for to hupset me. When heverything a person says is hill-tempered, it might just as well be kind for all the 'arm it does a body. What 'e does is a different business, of course. But we hall 'as our little 'obbies, gistes bein' Bings's."

"The curik," said Mrs. Gale, suddenly ceasing to weep, and fixing her tear-starred china-blue eyes on her visitor, "ses as 'ow it's a nice little strip er ground. Always says so, 'e does. I'd forgot the curik, so I 'ad, and 'e among me small mercies."

"Ah, 'e means to be kind," said Mrs. Bings. "'E'd say hanything to be kind, 'e would, an' there you 'as it again. When heverything a person ses is kind, it might as well be cross for hall the good it does a body. You-stop-a-turnin-Tommy-or-I'll-slap-yer!"

"'That's a nice little strip er ground you've got, Mrs. Gale,' ses 'e," murmured Mrs. Gale, pursuing her new line of thought unheeding. "'E always ses so."

"'E never did 'ave much conversation," replied Mrs. Bings.

"'E knows a good bit 'er ground when he sees it, the curik does," said Mrs. Gale faintly.

"It's 'is heye of faith, I heggspec'," said Mrs. Bings, reflectively.

"What's a heye of faith?" asked Mrs. Gale.

"Seein' things where there ain't nothink," replied Mrs. Bings. "Parsings always 'as it—like 'Eving an' sech."

Mrs. Gale pondered.

"Well, it reelly might 'a' been a bit of 'Eving if no golding streets, which what a hexpense," she said, "an' the curik knows what it was like. Many's the time I've told 'im 'ow it looked when me poor Charles was alive with hall 'is notions. Ah, 'e was fond of 'is garding, 'e was. No one ever 'ad sech flowers as we 'ad then—not at the Park itself they didn't—though of course we wouldn't 'ave mentioned it up there. Hold sorts and noo sorts—hirisis, syringes, h'Allens, an' scyllies—we 'ad 'em all. Some of they rootsis mus' be still in, and I looks to see 'em come a-rooshin' up hany spring. Perreps then your 'usbing 'ill be sorry 'e spoke, Mrs. Bings," added Mrs. Gale, as one struck by a new hope, "as I shell be only too pleased if so to hoverlook 'is little mistake."

"I've never knowed John sorry for nothink," said Mrs. Bings. "But of course there's no sayin'! Sudding death might do it, for hinstance, hor somethink hunexpected of the sort. Stop-a-turnin-Tommy-or-I'll-slap-yer!"

"It's me wish to be kind to hall," said Mrs. Gale, tremulously, "but it's hupset me from a child to see hanyone a-keepin' of their necks that stiff, in spite of the 'orror of Scripcher at the same, an' if I don' seem es kind to your 'usbing es I might 'ave been, Mrs. Bings, I 'ope you'll heggsplain to 'im gentle 'ow it is."

"'E'll never notice of it," said Mrs. Bings. "You ain't quite the kind of a persing as Bings 'ud notice, any'ow, Mrs. Gale, you see, so that'll be all right."

"Of course I'll go on a-prayin' for 'im," said Mrs. Gale.

"An' mos' well-meanin' of you, I'm sure," replied Mrs. Bings, "if 'ighly uncerting."

"I never 'as to pray for the curik," said Mrs. Gale. "As cheerin' a small mercy as ever was, 'e is. When 'e's done the Bible and the coal-club, up 'e gets an' 'e looks outer winder, an' 'e says serprised-like, 'you 'as a nice little strip there,' ses 'e, an' what I ses is, there mus' be somethink about it to catch 'is eye hevery time like that when there ain't nothink growin' in it that no one can heggszactly see."

"No, they can't heggzactly see nothink," said Mrs. Bings.

"I s'pose it 'as gorned orf a little?" said Mrs. Gale, glancing wistfully from the garden to her neighbor's face. "Gardings horften does do that; it means nothin', Mrs. Bings."

"Which it couldn't 'ardly mean less," replied Mrs. Bings thoughtfully.

"When the spring comes back, an' I gets me strength again a bit, I'll soon bring it round."

"You've said that for the larst five year, an' the garding's always been much the same as it is now, Mrs. Gale. A woman of your hage didn't 'ardly oughter be talkin' of springs; this 'ill be the larst you'll hever see, I heggspec', an' I should think of hother an' worse things besides gardings if I was you, sech as 'Eving an' the grave. You-stop-a-turnin'-Tommy-or-I'll-slap-yer!"

An unkind fate directed the vague kick which, as usual, accompanied this remark, and the gyrations of Tommy came suddenly to a dreadful end.

"Now there's a surprisin' thing," said his mother, endeavoring to hitch him up again with her foot. "I'm sure I never meant to knock 'im over. I 'ardly ever 'its anythink I aims at, which nothin' could be less heggspectid, though 'Eving knows it's triil enough to 'ave a giddy-go-round to me son, if we does all 'ave our little 'obbies. Stop-that-'owlin'-Tommy-or-I'll-'it-yer!"

But the embittered Tommy, on issuing from the silence of sheer surprise in which he had for several seconds contemplated the sudden change of scene as represented by the ceiling, bewailed this destruction of his best hopes in a series of high impassioned shrieks, which he refused to check or soften, and Mrs. Bings, talking apathetically the while, processed out slowly, hooking her son along the floor with alternate feet as she went. When she was gone, old Mrs. Gale stood for some time gazing out of the window at the wide, rodden, sodden, wrecked strip of ground between the privet hedges.

She saw it as the next-door neighbor did not. She saw two straight neat paths down the sides, and one down the middle, which last led to the well-staked steps by the willow that bespoke a man's care for the safe prosecution of the daily water-carrying of the cottage. She saw the sweet peas acing each other for the topmost twig of their bushy screen;

and the rose-red favors of the double hollyhocks, higher than her own head, glowed by the hedge again. She smelt the fragrance of a lifetime's blossoms rising from the beds and borders, where for thirty years flower and leaf had shot and spread in vigorous health under Charles's care, and where wonderful plants had rioted in company they would not so much as have kept in more distinguished surroundings. They were all a-bloom together, for memory's senses know no seasons. In that vision of ancient sweetness, cuttings from the gardens of other flower-growers told in every corner stories of friendships and kindly exchangings. The old apple tree by the water, that came down the winter after Charles died, lifted once more on many elbowed boughs its brave canopy of rose and ivory; and in the patch of long grass about its lichened foot the scylla held in a flower-head the blue it takes the skies miles of cloudless space to achieve.

There stood the triumphing peony clump, stalwart-stemmed, spreading by the back door its crude success of heavy reds and greens, and there the pale-belled Solomon's Seal, sea-green and green-white, like some tide-washed, colorless sea-lady. In the furthest corner waved the patch of slender wind-flowers, fragile and austere, like the cold faint wind of an early spring dawn caught and transfixed; and over the trellis the William Allen rioted in a long-vanished glory of peach gold and amber. A hundred old-fashioned flowers and herbs-lavender, lilies, lupins, and lilacs, marjoram, bergamot, balsam, and thyme—shared sun and earth once more with the rarer growths that were the pride of Charles's heart in that bee-besieged, odorous strip between the privet hedges.

Mrs. Gale looked and smiled—and looked again, and smiled no more. She turned slowly away from the window.

She had been expecting her strength to come back a bit every spring for several years. When it did not do so, she invariably expressed a mild wonder to her neighbors; and on the first day of July she reintroduced into her prayers, with a slight sigh that clause anent next spring, which the one just past had so unexpectedly failed to answer.

But this winter she awaited the turn of the year with a new anxiety. The garden had gone off. It had done so in a strangely sudden and incomprehensible manner, but the fact was undoubted. Other people—people with un-

friendly eyes and surly tongues, dreadfully set in their notions—had pointed it out. It was certainly necessary that the rootsis should start rooshin' this spring if they ever intended to do so at all, and meantime what anguish the sight of his garden, and the caustic comments it elicited might be causing the transplanted Charles.

Mrs. Gale had a terrible mental vision of him with one eye fixed on his music and the other anxiously squinting earthwards to see when the first shoots would begin to come up in the borders he loved.

"Which twiddlin' on a golding 'arp ain't never a thing as can 'ave come to 'im natchrul," she said. "An' 'ow 'e'll manidge with 'is mind thus distracted, I 'ardly like to think."

It could only need a little careful digging to bring the garden round, but how was she to give it careful digging if her strength did not come back a bit? Surely it would do so this spring!

"Let hus pray," said Mrs. Gale solemnly, when she reached this stage in her meditations. So all through January she prayed assiduously. She asked for the immediate bestowal of great bodily powers, and if possible a temporary cessation of the shaking in her knees, and assured the powers above that if this were once granted she could manage all the rest herself.

February came in with a softening of the earth, and a warm wet wind that brought out the colors of the countryside as instantaneously as a wave brings out the gleaming of a pebble beach. Mrs. Gale, with a startled expression, betook herself to yet more earnest prayer. February drew on, and she added an explanatory clause to her petitions, which represented how little it was she really needed, and how consistently she had been thankful for somewhat small mercies in the past. February came to an end, and the prayer was still unanswered. After deep thought Mrs. Gale ceased praying. With a determined countenance she cleaned the coal-shovel.

"If I've got to do it meself, as I ham," she said, "I ain't a-goin' to flatter no one by prayin' about it no more."

When it had been happening steadily for two weeks, the next-door neighbor was led to remark that Mrs. Gale was always at her front door to see him pass to his work and the public-house, and to wish him a quavering "good-day.'

After the second morning he did not trouble to answer her, but none the less she watched him unfailingly and bestowed her gentle, wrinkled old smile on him as he passed. Her interest in him seemed to cease with his return home, however. When Mr. Bings was in his house or his garden, Mrs. Gale always happened to be indoors with the door shut.

She had been a pretty creature all her life, and though she had never consciously attributed the power of her persuasions to this fact, it bewildered and agitated her greatly, as a most unusual occurrence, when anyone remained so set in his opinions as to refuse to yield to her conciliatory representations. She took care not to cross the path of such a one again if she could avoid doing so.

But one day Mr. Bings returned home unexpectedly early. Mrs. Gale was on her knees on a small piece of carpet in the middle of her garden, and the few square feet of ground immediately around her looked as if a rather unusually energetic hen had been scratching there. The solitary rose tree was tied with an old stocking to a stick several degrees more unsteady than itself, and the broken tiles had been collected and arranged in two extremely erratic lines down the middle of the garden.

When she heard the cottage door open she started with a violence that shook the coal-shovel from her hand. The color faded from her face, but she remained on her hands and knees, her head bent. It was a work of time to her even to move back from her knees, and escape was quite impossible. A step approached the hedge. She saw the red face that was looking over at her as clearly as though she were looking back at it, and an apprehensive tear dropped into the last scratch her energies had achieved in the earth before her.

"'Ullo!" said the voice she expected, "'ow are the rootsis gettin' on, hey? Still a-growin' steady hunderground, hey? Again' the time when you goes hunderground yourself, I s'pos, hey?"

Mrs. Gale remained speechless.

"Ha, ha," said the voice shortly, and returned to the further side of the garden.

Mrs. Gale, leaving the coal-shovel where it had fallen, crept slowly back into her cottage and shut the door.

Late that night, when the rest of the village was asleep

a light appeared in her kitchen window. A few minutes afterwards the back door opened softly and the old woman came creeping out again with a small piece of lighted candle in her hand. It was a still March night, and the coarse wick flared steadily in the quiet air. Inch by inch she examined the ground. Her old back could hardly sustain her through the stooping the scrutiny involved, but she forced it to its task. When she had finished she raised herself and blew out the candle. As it gave a last flicker it gleamed upon her tears. With trembling old knees that prayer had failed to strengthen, she came up the middle of the garden in the darkness. Her old feet kept instinctively between borders which for years had been as little visible as necessary. The back door closed again softly and the gray dawn came up.

"That old hass seems to 'ave give up 'er hunderground rootsis at lars'," said Mr. Bings with a chuckle. "I found 'er at it the hother day, and I don' think she'll garding again in a h'urry."

"Pore ole h'idjit," said Mrs. Bings. "We all 'as our little 'obbies."

"You 'old your blarsted tongue," said Mr. Bings.

Shortly afterwards Mrs. Bings came drifting in again, on an evening visit, this time without either the baby or the turning Tommy. The opening door let in with her the sound of a strange distant roaring, which she shut out, while she shut herself in with bolts and bars, and a regretful air.

"That's Bings," she explained over her shoulder. "It seems a pity 'e should be chantin' that loud an' 'arty with no one to listen to 'im, an' it's a thing as disapints 'im 'imself, but can't be 'elped."

Mrs. Gale said nothing. She sat in her chair with a bitter little smile on her face.

"There's few men takes their drink as 'appy as Bings, which 'e bursts inter musick an' darncin' on the hinstant, as it were," remarked Mrs. Bings, turning a wary eye on the door as the distant roaring swelled furiously upon the air. "Plesingter company reelly couldn't 'ardly be, as different as possible to when 'e's sober, which it goes to me 'eart to leave 'im, but there's limits to—— 'Ere 'e comes."

The door of the other cottage suddenly opened, and a

torrent of howls poured forth upon the night air. It was then heard that Mr. Bings was lending his soul relief in the strains of "Oh, lay me in me little grave."

"'E's been darncin' the polka to that steady for the larst 'alf-'our," said Mrs. Bings, thoughtfully. "Sung slow, with sudding 'ops, which nothin' could 'a' been plesingter, till 'e began for to knock me down whenhever 'e fell 'isself, which 'e did it serprised an' reproachful like an' mos' natchrul through hirritation, 'im thinkin' it was me, but, becomin' dang'rous, 'e 'ad to be left a-darncin' lonesome, as is a thing 'e finds most' disapintin'."

Still Mrs. Gale said nothing. The strains advanced nearer. Presently something fell heavily against the door, and the next instant it shook under a furious assault which made the plaster tinkle round the posts.

"I 'ope the bolt 'olds," remarked Mrs. Bings philosophically. "'E's a little hextra heasy hirritated to-night, so to speak, through 'avin' been fightin' Hangelo at the Red Lion, an' not feelin' quite as certing as 'e might whether 'e whopped Hangelo, or Hangelo whopped 'im. Besides which, when first 'e come 'ome I manidged to forget 'im, as hallways hupsets 'im a little."

The door shook again amid roars of a passionate nature, wherein Mr. Bings was discerned to be adjuring Mrs. Bings to become a honeysuckle on condition of his devoting the rest of his natural life to the duties of a bee. Mrs. Bings inside, smiled in a faint reflective manner, and sighed gently. After several alternate songs and assaults, mingled with threats couched in regrettably clear language, Mr. Bings fell into a state of deep depression, and was heard to sob loudly once or twice. Seemingly led to the mistake by a train of associations suggested by his situation, he then announced with tears that he was a little match-girl lost in the snow, whose immediate intention it was to pass smiling from slumber to an early death near a Christmas party; after which he explained, still weeping, that his only clear course of action under the circumstances was to fetch a policeman to arrest her at once for sleeping on other people's doorsteps.

With this intention, having taken an affectionate farewell of the door-post, he departed, and after sitting down on the way several times to cheer the road with song, he at length reached his cottage. The door was heard to close,

and almost immediately afterwards unbroken silence prevailed.

"Where's the children?" said Mrs. Gale then.

"Asleep or 'owlin'," replied Mrs. Bings, "an' in some cases perreps both through the nightmare, hexcep' Tommy, as I left a-turnin' steady roun' the washtub, but no time to slap 'im. Bings never touches 'em, 'owever light-'arted 'e is, which a better father when drunk couldn't be. Now 'e's sleepin' it orf like hany hangel, I heggspec', but safest to let 'im get sound. Well, I've 'ad rather a night of it."

She came across to the fire and sat down.

"Got a drop er tea?" she asked.

Mrs. Gale rose and took the teapot from the hob.

"'Oo did you say 'e'd been a-fightin' with?" she asked.

"'E'd been fightin' Hangelo," replied Mrs. Bings.

"Is Hangelo back, then?" asked Mrs. Gale, pausing with the suspended teapot in her hand.

"Been back hover a week, an' wilder than hever, an' 'ad a fight reg'lar hevery night," said Mrs. Bings; "which 'is American swears is a pictcher for to listen to, an' 'imself a pictcher for to look at, if 'e 'as got strange blood in 'im somewheres, as in wukkus children is horften the case. Ah, this *is* tea, Mrs. Gale."

"It oughter be," replied Mrs. Gale; "it's been hours on the 'ob."

The two women relapsed into silence, and sat sipping their beverage slowly, with vacant eyes fixed on the fire.

"Well, I 'ad oughter get back, I s'pose," said Mrs. Bings, rising at last. "'E'll be sound orf be now, an' I wants me bed. It hallways makes me feel a bit sick to be knocked about. I heggspec' Tommy's in the washtub be now, too. Goo'-night, Mrs. Gale, an' thank you."

"Your face is bleedin', Mrs. Bings," said Mrs. Gale.

"Ah, I thought 'e'd got 'ome," said Mrs. Bings with pride. "It's from the 'ed. I couldn't find the cut, but I was pretty sure 'is knuckles 'ad drawed blood. Bings isn't one to miss 'is mark, drunk hor sober."

"I could wish 'e wasn't quite ser set on some of 'is notions," said Mrs. Gale suddenly, with trembling lips. "But of course men ain't like wimming; there ain't the same need for 'em to listen to reason."

"An' I'm sure a plesingter man than John couldn't reelly

be, you know," said Mrs. Bings, "once you get hover 'is little 'obby with 'is fistes. Look at 'is jokes, now. The way 'e was making fun about your garding again this morning, Mrs. Gale, nearly made me die a-larfin', which I reelly halmost called you in to 'ave a larf at 'im too."

"Laughin' about my garding, was 'e?" said Mrs. Gale, her lips trembling still more.

"Nothink could 'a' been plesingter than it was to 'ear 'im," said Mrs. Bings emphatically.

"I thought perreps it 'ud slip 'is mem'ry in time, as it were," said Mrs. Gale faintly.

"A joke like that 'ere 'ud never slip John's mem'ry," replied Mrs. Bings. "It 'ill come hup laughable again an' again, which a witsomer man than John you couldn't wish to meet. 'Is 'ead's wonderful for sech things. Goo'-night, Mrs. Gale."

In the cold gray dawn that had but just slipped over the hills near the village, two people suddenly met each other next morning. The encounter caused both of them unbounded surprise, not unmixed with horror; but while on the face of the young man who had dropped into the road over the fence, relief after the first moment was mingled with vanishing alarm, the countenance of the old woman at whose feet he had alighted remained petrified with dismay.

"Well, of hall the rum starts," ejaculated the young man. "Blessed if I didn't think I was jumping clean into the keeper."

Mrs. Gale knew the speaker in an instant, though she had not seen him since he emigrated. The extraordinarily sweet eyes and face, which had smoothed his dare-devil path for him ever since they inspired a softened workhouse matron to christen him Angelo, were unaltered and unmistakable.

"Hangelo!" she gasped, with a fearful start, and let slip the corners of her apron. Down rolled its contents all over the road.

"Well, I'm jiggered. What in blazes d'you do that for?" said Angelo.

"'Ush," faltered Mrs. Gale, gazing at him with the fascination of terror, and revealing the full horror of the situation in one irresistible outburst. "I've been stealin'."

So had Angelo. The satisfied eye of the lurcher at his

heels and the bulging pockets of his old coat testified with what success.

Two thieves gazed at each other in the soft gray light, while the third wagged a congratulatory tail; and splash went the damp from the long yellow tips of the few remaining chestnut leaves still hanging scantily in the mists of the bordering copse.

Suddenly Mrs. Gale's eyes widened; her features worked, her expression changed from consternation to horror. She looked like one suddenly awakened from sleep.

"I'm a thief," she said faintly, and burst into tears.

"'As it only jus' struck you, as it were?" inquired Angelo; but Mrs. Gale was unable to make any coherent answer. She wept passionately in the midst of the scattered contents of her apron, while the lurcher, in a frenzy of agitated astonishment that anyone should make such an unnecessary mistake as to mourn in a world where rabbits were so plentiful, leapt wildly in the air in a mad endeavor to lick her face.

"Well, this 'ere certingly is a rum start," said Angelo again, with deep conviction. He set his traps and encumbrances in the road, drew forth a large red handkerchief, and without embarrassment, and in a forcible and businesslike manner, proceeded to swathe Mrs. Gale's countenance in its folds.

"Them as steals generally is thieves," he remarked, "or so considered. There ain't nothin' to be serprised hover in that 'ere. It 'ud reelly be more serprisin' if they wasn't, you know Come now, ole lady, stop 'owlin'. Since you're not the keeper—which certingly nothin' could be further—and I'm not the bobby—why 'owl? Wimming don't usually cry when they meets me, though I might perreps 'a' broke meself more gradual on the sight this time, so to speak."

"I ain't ser much 'owlin at you, Hangelo," gasped Mrs. Gale, struggling for self-control behind the handkerchief. "I wouldn't be ser rewde."

"That's a comfit," said Angelo. "I'm sure I bows towards you. An' what's hall these 'ere hunions?"

"They ain't hunions," said Mrs. Gale, emerging with a scandalized countenance; "they're rootsis—garding rootsis."

"Where from?" asked Angelo.

Mrs. Gale's features worked anew.

"From Major Pym's," she sobbed. "Oh, Hangelo, if you tells on me, I'll die."

"*I tell*," said Angelo. "'Oo'd tell? Look 'ere."

He opened his pockets.

"Them's Pym's, too," he said with a laugh. "When you tells on my rebbits, I'll tell on your rootsis. See? Now let's pick 'em up an' get 'ome afore we're both on us copped. I'll 'elp you with 'em."

"We're a pair of thieves, Hangelo," faltered Mrs. Gale.

"An' a very 'andsome pair, too," said Angelo, commencing to collect the scattered bulbs. I never want to see blewer heyes in hany woman's 'ead."

But in spite of the reassuring tone of this remark Mrs. Gale's tears continued to stream, and after a brief moment of struggle she disappeared again behind the handkerchief and emitted a yet heavier sob, to the unspeakable agitation of the lurcher.

"Well, you can 'owl," said Angelo, pausing in his occupation. "What's the matter with you, hey? What am I to do for you, hey?"

"I'm a thief," wailed Mrs. Gale.

"Fur be it from me to contradick you," said Angelo. "It certingly does look a little like it; but if so, don' you fin' yourself able to get over that 'ere, as it were?"

"No," sobbed Mrs. Gale.

"Perreps it 'll come heasier later on," suggested Angelo.

"It never, never will," gasped Mrs. Gale. "The way you come a-droppin' down at me feet jus' now, as it might 'a' been Elijah, 'as brought it all 'ome to me that dreadful which I can't think why it never come 'ome to me before. But the scoffs of me nex'-dore neighbor was sech——"

"No wonder you was startilled, if you took me for Elijah," said Angelo, meditatively, "which is a thing as 'as never 'appinged to me before. But I hallways thought Elijah was an 'oly ole man as went the other way, so to speak."

"It won't come round 'owever I digs," sobbed Mrs. Gale, "though the rootsis must be wonerful thick. An' what with Charles a-lookin' orf that hanxious from 'is musick, an' me nex'-dore neighbor that set in 'is opinions, an' no one takin' the leas' notice of hany of me prayers up above, I didn't see 'ow I could bear it no longer. But oh, whatever Charles 'ill feel a-glancin' orf from a-twiddlin' of 'is golding 'arp an' a-seein' of me thievin', I don' dare to think. Which it'll kill 'im.'

"'Oo's Charles?" inquired Angelo, straightening himself with a swift glance around.

"Charles in 'Eving," sobbed Mrs. Gale.

"Oh," said Angelo. "Well, that's a nice, safe, far-away place both for 'im an' us."

"I 'aven't said me prayers for weeks together," faltered Mrs. Gale, "a-trustin' himpious in the coal-shovel, an' this is where it hends. Oh, 'ow shell I hever face the curik as 'as hallways been that constant among me little mercies!"

Here she raised her voice on a note of such nerve-rending height that the lurcher flung a passionate nose to the sky, and gave vent to his lacerated feelings in a despairing howl. Angelo regarded her with a perplexed frown.

"Look 'ere," he said, "don't 'owl like that. What's the good of spoilin' a pair of pretty heyes? Will these 'ere hunions grow if they're put back?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Gale, pausing in her wails and looking at him apprehensively, "if they're set careful."

"Well, s'pose I go an' put 'em back," said Angelo. "Then you won't be a thief no more, an' you needn't cry no more."

There was a moment's silence. Mrs. Gale's features worked again with conflicting emotions.

"The scoffs of 'me 'nex'-dore neighbor is 'sech——" she faltered.

"'Oo's 'e?" asked Angelo.

"John Bings," said Mrs. Gale, with a sob.

"The man I thrashed yesterday," said Angelo, with the air of one who has discovered a pleasing reminiscent link. "Well, 'e won't scoff at you no more, once I tells 'im what 'ill 'apping hotherwise."

But still Mrs. Gale hesitated. "If you puts 'em back——" she faltered.

"Well?" said Angelo.

"There's Charles," said Mrs. Gale, brokenly.

"Charles in 'Eving?" inquired Angelo. "But it seems to me 'e's got to be hupset any'ow."

"The garding looks that bare all on a sudding," gasped Mrs. Gale, "an', oh, it must go to 'is 'art dreadful."

She gazed up at Angelo with tears of anguish streaming down her cheeks, and Angelo looked down at her.

Mrs. Gale always looked at men with anxious hope, as though, in a world full of pitfalls and sudden castings down

they alone, if they would be so kind, could explain everything, arrange everything, and mend everything for her.

"You go 'ome an' get some food inside of yourself," said Angelo, suddenly. "Hanythink ser 'ungry-lookin' an' scared I never see. I'm a-goin' to put these 'ere hunions back, an' then I'm comin' to see the garding meself. A person as sees Elijah a-leapin' over 'edges an' bringin' 'ome their sins to 'em on the 'igh-roads like this 'ere, won't never make a livin' at thievin', an' it's bes' not to fight again' the trewth, if disappointin'. We'll see if we can't do somethink for the garding an' for Charles in 'Eving, an' perreps for Bings, too, as isn't in 'Eving, nor hever likely to be. You leave orf 'owlin' over your sins, which if I puts these 'ere hunions back you won't 'ave hany to 'owl over, an' go 'ome an' get some food inside yourself."

"Are you goin' to put them rebbits back too, Hangelo?" asked Mrs. Gale, timidly.

"Now, I harsk you," said Angelo, strongly, "am I a-'owlin' because I'm a thief?"

"No," said Mrs. Gale.

"Do I look as if I should ever 'owl for hanythink so stoopid?" demanded Angelo.

"No, Hangelo," replied Mrs. Gale, truthfully.

"Jusso," said Angelo. "Now you go 'ome."

A few days later Mr. Bings, hoeing in his own domain, heard again the sounds of gardening on the other side of the privet hedge. He paused; a slow grin overspread his countenance. He laid down his hoe and moved on unwieldy tiptoes across the garden. His red countenance appeared suddenly over the green barrier.

"Rootsis a-comin' on, hey?" he began, and stopped short with his mouth open.

"The rootsis is comin' on very 'andsome, thank you, Mr. Bings," said Angelo, slowly rising on the other side of the hedge.

"Oh, ah," said Mr. Bings.

"An' somethink helse might be comin' on too, as perreps you don' heggspec' quite ser much as the rootsis," said Angelo, resting a foot on his fork and an elbow on its handle and fixing a cold eye on Mr. Bings.

"I'm sure I'm not heggspectin' nothin' that I'm aweer Hangelo," replied Mr. Bings, loftily.

"It 'ill be the more surprisin' when it comes then," said Angelo, "as it's likely to do sudding, if I sees that there warmin'-pan of a face of yours a-smilin' over the 'edge again, which no wonder the rootsis 'ad a difficulty in comin' up."

"Ha, ha," laughed Mr. Bings, "you will 'ave your little joke, Hangelo."

"Mine's the same joke as Mrs. Gale's," said Angelo; "it's, a good joke on the 'ole. We larfs at it sometimes together, she an' me. I don't know if it 'ud amuse you much, but if you stops where you hare much longer, you'll 'ave a chanst of tryin'."

"I 'ope I 'as the right to stand in me own garding," said Mr. Bings, taking a dignified step backwards as Angelo drew slowly nearer the hedge.

"Oh, certingly; but if you 'as a fancy for standin' in it, perreps you'd better choose another part," said Angelo, beginning carelessly to draw off his coat. "It's 'ardly what you'll find yourself a-doin' of long in the part you're on now. There ain't an ole woman on this side of the 'edge to-day, John Bings."

"I'm sure I never meant nothink to 'arm the ole woman," said Mr. Bings, in an injured tone of voice. "Hanythink kinder than I've been to 'er it would be 'ard to meet in a day's march, an' she a-watchin' to see me pass 'er 'ouse in the way she does."

"She's pleased to see the back of you, as anyone might be a-knowin' what was on the hother side," said Angelo. "Now get out—d'you 'ear? Get, afore I comes over and kicks you out."

"I'm a-goin'," replied Mr. Bings, with several rather less dignified steps backwards at the sudden fierceness which accompanied Angelo's last remarks. "I've no wish to stay where I'm not wanted, Hangelo."

"You can't 'elp doin' that so long as you're hanywheres," said Angelo

Inside her kitchen Mrs. Gale, with her back to the window, prayed earnestly against too keen an enjoyment of her enemy's discomfiture.

"Which little do I deserve it hafter the way I trustid himpious to the coal-shovel," she explained, with tears, to Mrs. Bings, who, revolved around by the meditative Tommy, came drifting swiftly in to discover what had happened; her hus-

band, beyond an embittered blow or two, having vouchsafed no explanation of his sudden hoeless return from gardening, "an' all the while the hanswer to me prayers a-rushin' along from 'Eving in the way 'e was, which we met quite hunexpected a few mornin's back, an' he kindly orffered to come in an' 'elp me with the garding a bit, 'earin' I'd got a little be'ind'and, as it were. Never 'ave I seen a better digger, hexceptin' Charles 'isself, which, of course, is hall the garding wanted, an' there's sevril rootsis a-showin' already as mus' 'ave heen close on top. I think I 'eard Angelo heggsplainin' of it gentle to your 'usbing, Mrs. Bings, an' I'm sure I'm mos' willin' to hoverlook 'is little fault, which hall can't be heggspectid to understand gardinin' like I do meself."

Finding honesty an excellent policy to pursue hand in hand with others less officially recognized, Angelo made great friends with the gardeners of the chief families about the place. They thought him a singularly amiable and intelligent young fellow, with a taste for gardening and an appreciation of other people's talents in that line which deserved to be encouraged; and Angelo begged from them by day and stole from them by night with equal satisfaction and success.

Wherever Angelo dug Mrs. Gale came digging after, as busy as he and fifty times more important, issuing commands which Angelo obeyed with mingled humor and vigor, while the lurcher, curled up on his master's coat, slept the sleep of those whose labors are by night, and spake in his dreams of the sweet reminiscences inspired by the odors of his couch.

The time came when Mrs. Gale used to watch for Mr. Bings across the privet hedge, and, drawing his attention by coughs and loud blowings of the nose, would engage him in artless conversations in which Mr. Bings found himself constrained to sustain his part with an unhappy politeness, and which always ended in the way the rootsis was a-comin' on.

"An' none on 'em's stolen, is they, Hangelo?" Mrs. Gale would ask with a cheerful laugh, as one who from a citadel of prayers, and mercies small and great, could afford to cast back a smile on darker days.

'Bless you, no," said Angelo, "the rootsis was wonerful thick; they only needed a little careful diggin'!"

# FRIENDS to the Poor: A Story of Modern Spain, by Eusebio Blasco. Adapted from the Spanish by William Struthers*

WELL known and greatly respected in Madrid society was a certain marchioness, whose name we do not give, but to whom the newspapers referred as "the distinguished," "the illustrious," "the pious," or "the beautiful." For the upper ten, as well as the sportive *chulos*, have their soubriquets, and if the Madrid women of the poorer class are designated as "the signboard," "the tight topknot," or "the mournful," not less readily do the journalists apply the epithets "elegant," "charitable," or "virtuous" to dames of high degree. Our marchioness "received," and in this was superior to any of our first-rate espadas (bull-fighters), who, by confession of their intimates, do not know how "to receive."

Every Friday evening the marchioness entertained a half dozen friends, for whom she not only provided abundant refreshments, but also dishes with outlandish names, on a bill-of-fare in French, because, if not set down in French, what one eats is beneath one's notice. After eating, the guests of the marchioness played ombre, or talked literature, politics, or religion.

Devoting her life to the poor, the marchioness organized charity balls, benevolent clubs and fairs of a similar character; and, indeed, there is no question but that she was an exceedingly estimable person. Each successive Friday had its own set of guests; so that the marchioness alternated her relations with society over the supper table; but at every repast her chaplain never failed to be present—a model curé, angelic in disposition, neither a Carlist nor a Liberal, and no more ambi-

*Adapted for Short Stories.

tious than radical. An honorable priest, a sincere shepherd of souls was he, and likewise a very strong hand at ombre.

Although the marchioness had numerous domestics, the servant nearest and dearest to her was her faithful, wide-awake Manuel, whom all the friends of the household liked and treated as one of the family. To each and every one of them he talked as though they were companions; while many a favor had he done them. Very worthy, in sooth, was he, and Don Esteban (for such was the chaplain's name) even went so far as to dub him a saint.

And now on the particular Friday evening, wherewith we are concerned, matters proceeded in the following manner:

Barring Don Esteban, first came Antoñito, and to say this means everything; for the mere name, Antoñito, represents a biography.

But who is Antoñito?

Antoñito is a very lively and very elegant youth, with no profession, no business, and no income, and out of whom his parents have not succeeded in making anything, but whom everybody courts and praises, because everybody likes him.

To-day he dines in one house, to-morrow in another; plays and sings snatches of songs at the piano, cuts a figure at La Peña, belongs to a club in the suburbs, dances very well, rides a bicycle, thrums the guitar, kills bullocks (in the ring), gets drunk once in a while, fights if need be, applies nicknames that stick, tells jokes, is a crack marksman and sleeps away his day. Yet every drawing-room opens its doors to him, because he belongs to a good family.

Next came Vizconde de Tal. The viscount is a bachelor, retired diplomat, member of all the Catholic clubs, subscriber to all the "smart" lectures, a monkish literatus—that is to say, the author of verses to Saint Paul, the first hermit, and to the blessed Maria Ana de Jesus; the author also of a life of Santo Domingo de la Calzada, patron saint of Calahoera, as well as of the glories of the Inquisition—works crowned by the Spanish Academy, which keeps him in pickle, so to speak, for the next vacant seat. He is twenty-six years of age, and without a copper.

Third on the list we find Don Fidel Hermosilla, a retired Treasury clerk and a man of order, who injured his prospects by falling in love with somebody beneath him, but ahead of him in spending his salary—a very respectable-looking man, with gold-rimmed spectacles, and a cross embroidered on his

dress coat, which fits him very neatly. He is said to get his living now from ombre; but some people do not believe it.

Finally came Condé del An, a very lively young fellow, formerly a clerk in the Lottery Office, who, having married a countess, got to be called count—a title that he has retained, permitting folks to speak of him just as if he belonged to the Tamanes, Albas or Medinacelis. Left a widower at twenty-five, he spent his wife's fortune right merrily, and has now nearly reached the bottom of his purse, although he is not willing to acknowledge the fact, and his tailor has undertaken to make him appear to be wealthy. His good humor and his smart speeches make him popular in fashionable, or rather in general, society. He enlivens dinner-table talk with tales from real life, and people stand in awe of his sharp tongue. He and Antoñito were at that time the delight of the marchioness's Friday receptions, when they chanced to meet there. Manuel, the old servant, would sometimes peep through the dining-room curtains to listen to them; while even Don Esteban would consent to ignore certain expressions, for the sake of the good things that went along with them.

It was eight o'clock when our six friends seated themselves at table. Their conversation embraced a variety of topics, each guest vying with his neighbor in readiness of speech. Antoñito gave a detailed account of the latest bull fight, and argued over the competency of the Minister of War with Don Fidel. The viscount announced the lecture that he purposed giving on "Changes of Linen during the Reign of Constantine," as well as his forthcoming book, "The History of the Iconoclasts of la Mancha," and, between *turbot sauce capres* and *aspic de foie gras* (which he ate with elegant voracity), expatiated upon Origen and Tertulian and Arius and the Nestorians, not to mention the Council of Nice and the barbarities of the Albigensians. Don Esteban was enchanted, while the count talked politics, comparing Don Francisco Silvela to the ancient heretics, Pi y Margall to Simon Magus, and Don Carlos to Antichrist. In fact, he found his little word for everything. They all ate heartily and then begged Antoñito to strike up some gay dances between the coffee and ombre.

As the marchioness received only men at her house, she allowed a certain freedom that caused the evening to pass very pleasantly. And just at the end of the repast, as the chaplain was referring in highly eulogistic terms to the charity

festival organized by her the previous week, the lady herself observed:

"Apropos, I must request a favor of you gentlemen."

All present hastened to give their consent, be the petition what it might.

"You are well aware, gentlemen," continued the marchioness, "that I am not at all in the habit of annoying my friends with direct appeals for aid in my charities. I prefer asking them to take a fauteuil at the theater, a ticket for a raffle, or a box at a concert; but this evening, before you take your leave, I shall place you all under contribution."

Very slightly did each one wince; yet wince each one did, albeit for an instant only.

"Agreed! Is that all! Whatsoever your highness wishes! Always doing good!" were some of the exclamations that followed. But the marchioness had not said her last word.

"It concerns an unfortunate," she went on, "who has applied to me for help, and I rely upon you, gentlemen, to assist me. On two or three Fridays, with the aid of all my friends, I shall be enabled to make a wretched creature very happy."

"The Señora Marquesa already knows," emphasized the curé, "that every copper I win at ombre goes to the poor."

"Though there are no poor in Madrid," interrupted Antoñito. "If your reverence wishes to talk crooked, you had better practise it on my landlord, who can lie faster than he can speak."

"Come, come! Coffee is served, gentlemen."

Don Fidel thereupon offering his arm to the marchioness, the company adjourned to the drawing-room, where the coffee was awaiting them.

According to her custom, the marchioness left her guests to themselves for a half hour, in order to let them smoke and chat without restraint. And during that half hour two other friends arrived—Commandant Soles, who informed the company that his last peseta had been won from him at the Casino, and begged not to have the matter mentioned to their hostess, lest she should haul him over the coals; and a poor young man, named Ambrosio, who was a protégé of the excellent marchioness, and owned nothing save the short coat on his back and the carnation in his buttonhole. Briefly explained, the foul fiend, who delights in getting things in a tangle, on that particular night so contrived matters that everybody should be asked for money, when nobody had any, although none was willing to

acknowledge the fact, because it seemed an unseemly thing to do in a house where one is invited to eat.

Antoñito, puffing at a cigar and drumming on the piano, made a wry face to attract the count's attention. Then, bearing hard on the loud pedal, so as to prevent the others from hearing what he said, he inquired: "Have you any money with you?"

"How should I? I have just enough for the game and a thank you."

"As the curé is sure to get that, you are certainly well off! Moreover, you know we all have to contribute to a poor fund before our departure."

"Yes, I know, and therefore ask you the same question in my turn: 'Have you any money with you?' "

"I should rather say not!"

"Well, what are we going to do?"

The commandant just then drawing near, the count said to him: "Listen, Soles, just before leavetaking you will be requested to contribute to a poor fund."

"I? If that's the case, I'm off!"

"Haven't you any money about you? None whatever?"

"No, not a centime! Haven't I told you that I've just lost fifteen hundred pesetas? So what business have I to be here?"

"Frankly," observed Antoñito, as he nonchalantly played the romance from "La Favorita," "this is a nice hole we've all tumbled into!"

"Were only one of us without money, it wouldn't look so bad; but for all of us to be in the same plight is a disgrace!"

"As soon as I heard of the threatened 'bleeding,'" muttered the count, "my digestion became affected, and those artichokes lie like a dead weight on my stomach."

"Don't join the game. Let us be off."

"Gentlemen!" cried the chaplain, already seated and shuffling the cards, "to your places!"

Don Fidel was likewise seated and, leaning toward the curé, said in a whisper: "Don Esteban, lend me four duros until to-morrow."

"Ah, I'm so sorry," replied the good father; "I haven't a bit of money about me. When I'm unlucky at ombre I ask the marchioness for money and reimburse her the next day."

"But I have only just so much on my person, as I made a payment on my way hither; and if I should lose at play,

could not contribute anything to the marchioness's poor fund."

"How could you lose, Don Fidel? Why, you know more about ombre than the man who invented it."

"Yet just suppose I were to lose. I am not a man who permits all the world to know his business. Come, I'm going to take my leave. I cannot endure the thought of incurring such a risk."

"God will provide, God will provide!" returned the curé. "Ho, there! diamonds, hearts, spades, clubs! The viscount must deal!"

The viscount was having his own thoughts. He kept aloof and begged favors of nobody, striding up and down the apartment, between the door and the window, like a caged lion; while his ears were redder than when he penned his "Ode to Saint Simon Stylites the Less," which won a prize from the municipality of Cadrete, province of Saragossa. He had not brought any money for ombre, because that was the thirty-first of the month, and the viscount was wont religiously to pay his debts on that day, and remained without a copper in his pocket; while no one knew whether he was poor or rich. How was he going to inform the marchioness that he had not a cuarto about him? He talked to himself, and, as he walked to and fro, mumbling, the good curé said: "Come, come! Drop those verses, and I'll add a coda to them of my own!"

"Wait a moment," he answered, in a very low voice, as though, all of a sudden, a luminous idea had struck him; and, walking off, he remained absent about ten minutes, returning with the countenance of a man whose mind is thoroughly at ease, and, sitting down again, he began to shuffle the cards.

"Ah!" cried Antoñito, striking up the march from "Le Prophéte" with a grand crash and clangor. "Now I have it! A rare idea! Now I have it!"

"What is it, what is it?" eagerly questioned the commandant and the count.

"Manuel! Manuel will give us the money!"

"Manuel? The servant?" queried the commandant.

"You are right," chimed in the count. "The old family servant, he who is so fond of us all. Why, he lent me last month ten duros, which I had lost at ombre. Not having sufficient with me to make things square, I stole out softly, told him what a strait I was in, he came to my rescue, and two days afterward I handed him back the money with a bonus."

"I do not borrow money from servants" replied the commandant.

"All right! It is not the same with you as with us. He knew us when we were children, and was a confidant in all our scrapes. I will ask for both," said Antoñito. "Go, my dear count, and have your little game at ombre."

"I'll do so, now that we've arranged affairs."

Whereupon the count seated himself at the table, and the commandant did likewise, to make a fourth hand at the game, counting upon the other two to make all settlements; while Antoñito gracefully made his exit to seek out and confer with old Manuel in the antechamber. From afar he descried Ambrosio already in confidential converse with the aged servitor.

Poor Ambrosio had overheard the remarks of the others at the piano, and began to feel exceedingly squeamish; and, as he did not possess a coin to bless himself with, he thought the best plan was to borrow from the old man, to whom he was just at that moment saying:

"Manuel, lend me a couple of duros, payable at the end of the month. I'm awfully hard up, and cannot speak to the marchioness on the subject, because only yesterday she paid what I owed at my lodgings."

And Manuel's response was: "Wait, Señorito, until I see whether I have enough about me; for I've just handed the Señor Vizconde four duros, as he lost his portmonnaie in the Calle Salve. Yes, here it is, and now don't waste it."

Ambrosio went back to the drawing-room, and Antoñito, coming very close, slapped Manuel familiarly on the shoulder:

"Manuel, dear, kind Manuel, my good little old boy, who is it that thinks a great deal of you? And how do you manage always to be so good and so even-tempered?"

"Señorito Antoñito is always so funny!"

"Ah, but if you don't help Señorito Antoñito out of the scrape he is in, he is going this very night to blow his brains out at the viaduct!"

"Lord Jesus! do not offend God! What is the matter?"

And thereupon, in whispered, hurried accents, Antoñito made a speech full of falsehoods and tremendous phrases, the purport whereof was simply that Manuel must give him twenty duros before midnight.

"Twenty duros! Señor Dios!" ejaculated Manuel, who hailed from Navarre, "I was expecting something of this

kind. Why, what ails you all? And, look you, Señorito Antoñito, I swear to you that I have but twenty duros in my trunk. And if you knew, if you only knew—but you do not wish to know! Welladay! I'll go fetch them to you. But when will you, dear kind Señorito, give them back to me?"

"Oh, to-morrow or the next day! Run and get them. Are they in one note or separate?"

'They are separate. But what difference does that make?"

"Never mind! I know what I'm talking about. Go!"

And away went the good old man to get the money; and when he presently brought it, Antoñito kissed his bald pate before returning in triumph to the drawing-room, to which the marchioness had also gone back, and now asked him to play some Flemish dances whilst the others continued their game.

Never was ombre played with greater zest and animation. The chaplain showed himself at his very best, and nearly drove his fellow players to desperation; for he won every game. He took from them right and left, laughing with all his might as he stripped them of every cuarto. The commandant rose to his feet, furious, and muttered to the count:

"This is unendurable. I really believe the old chap isn't playing straight!"

The viscount slipped out quietly, and thus saved himself from being petitioned in charity's name. Ambrosio did not play.

At eleven o'clock the servants brought tea, and whilst the marchioness was preparing the cups, Antoñito stealthily handed the commandant four duros, the count four, and four more to Don Fidel, each of whom had whispered to him in turn: "I haven't a real in my pocket; Don Esteban has skinned me completely!"

At midnight the curé observed that it was growing late. Whereupon the marchioness said: "Now, then, my dear friends, having already announced that I should trouble you to-night with a petition, I shall add that it relates to a great misfortune. A little alms, for the love of God!"

And, then, as though it had been the most natural thing in the world, each guest handed her his four duros—that is all excepting Antoñito, who gave eight, and Ambrosio, who gave two. Then, with a thousand amiable expressions, they prepared to depart.

"Wait a moment," said their hostess, "until I summon

Manuel and bid him take this money to-morrow to the person for whom it is intended. Manuel, come here!"

"Manuel."

"Señora Marquesa."

"You have told me of an unfortunate who, by reason of a merchant's failure, has lost all his savings, have you not?"

"Yes, Señora."

"You have also told me that the unhappy man does not wish me to be the one to rescue him from suicide, because I have already done so much for him, but desires rather to have me beg my friends for assistance, who are all friends to the poor. Is not this the truth?"

"Yes, Señora."

"Well, then, you may tell him that these good friends of mine have all responded to the voice of charity, and I now hand you the twenty-six duros that they wish you to convey to him. I am not acquainted with the ruined man; but, perhaps, these gentlemen would like to know whom they are helping. Can you not give me the name of the unfortunate person?"

Slowly, with all humility, Manuel answered:

"Señora, the unfortunate person is I myself!"

The guests of the marchioness hastily took their leave, each one fleeing in his own particular direction and, to tell the truth, laughing to himself over the occurrence.

Manuel was discharged the following day.

"How shameful!" exclaimed the marchioness. "To oblige me to beg for a member of my own household! To have a servant who has been in my family for thirty years compel me to annoy my friends in such a manner!"

Antoñito and the count neither returned themselves nor sent the money back; yet were they urgently invited to sup with the marchioness. The viscount wrote a pamphlet on "Pauperism in Families." Only the commandant handed Antoñito back the twenty pesetas on a day when he had won ten thousand reales with a single duro.

Poor Manuel found no friends in the hospital where he took refuge save the pious curé, Don Esteban, who, recalling that famous night, repeatedly said to him:

"Why, man, don't you know that nearly all the money that many persons give to the poor is only what they themselves have taken from them before?"

# A TALE of Two Hours and a Half: by Eugen Salinger. Translated from the German by Helen G. Smith. Illustrations by A. L. Upton.*

THE station bell rang for the third time. In the large arched structure made of glass and iron the train stood ready to depart. The travelers had already taken their places. The train was quite full, for with the exception of a compartment in the last car, which contained but one gentleman, there was no place to accommodate any more passengers. And indeed, they did not seem to be expected. But at the very moment that the railway guard was about to put the

*Translated for Short Stories.

familiar little whistle to his mouth to give the final signal for departure, from the door of the waiting-room there rushed out onto the platform a crowd of young girls, accompanied by an older woman, hurried and breathless.

The guard impatiently let his whistle drop from his fingers, a conductor sprang hurriedly towards the new comers, and cried, in a half angry, half urgent manner:

"Quickly, quickly, ladies! You have not a second to lose! Are you all going?"

"Only this young lady," replied the older woman, striving painfully to get her breath while she pointed to a young girl who was parting with her friends amid tears. laughter, and kisses. "That is enough—children—enough! Don't you see that we are late? A compartment for ladies, if you please, conductor!"

"Forward!" ordered the guard.

"The ladies' compartment is full," said the conductor, at the same time opening the door of the compartment in which the one gentleman was sitting. "Make haste, here, Miss! If you wish you may change on the way!"

There was no time to lose. The young passenger scarcely entered the compartment of her own accord, but was rather pushed into it involuntarily. Her luggage—a few packages and boxes—was actually thrown into the window after her. The old lady cast a somewhat anxious glance at her departing treasure and a look of mistrust at the young man—then more tears and throwing of kisses, waving of handkerchiefs, farewells in many tones, and at last a shrill whistle. The engine bissed and the train started.

Now, at last, we may take the time to look more closely at the two travelers. There was nothing especially striking about the man. He was young, probably about thirty; the friendly, open, engaging features were not handsome, but also not homely; he was pale, and his face, framed by a dark beard, showed something of weariness and exhaustion. Fine gold eyeglasses gave him a somewhat learned appearance, and this impression was only intensified by the intellectual, clear-sighted look of his eye. On the cushion near him, and perhaps this betrayed the fact that he was a newspaper editor or some kind of a politician, there was spread out a row of papers and note-books. In his hand he held quite a large memorandum book, whose pages he turned over earnestly, and here and

there made a note. This rather suggested the traveling man of business making entries of his commissions; but the whole appearance of the traveler emphatically told against this assumption. Perhaps he was a painter, a sculptor, an architect or a musician; but to justify this estimate his face should not have had such a calm, one might almost say prosaic, expression. In short, if it were difficult for a clever student of humanity to decide from the outward appearance as to the standing, the vocation or occupation of the man and to hit the mark, how much more difficult was the task for the young girl, who after she had settled comfortably and cosily in the compartment—in truth at the greatest possible distance from the man—submitted her mysterious vis-à-vis to a hasty examination, and indulged in conjectures such as have been indicated without feeling sure of the point.

The gentleman, on the contrary, even if he had not been older and richer in experience and knowledge of men, could soon pass sentence on his unexpected traveling companion. She had come onto the platform with a whole party of young girls of the same age—she herself was seventeen at the most; they had all obeyed the commands of their leader. Who could she be but a boarding-school girl who, in some school for young ladies, had reached the top of the tree of knowledge, and now, to all appearances, was returning to her parents' home in order to be introduced to the so-called great world under her mother's eyes. In order to confirm the truth of this other and outward signs were not lacking. Close beside her the pretty girl had laid a German book of lyric poetry with gilt edges and beautifully bound; near it lay a fresh bunch of forget-me-nots, which she presently pressed to her lips with sorrow.

A young school girl—that was unmistakable—but what a girl! If the poets talk of golden hair and heavenly blue eyes, ten to one they are on the point of painting a madonna; here, too, the hair was golden and the eyes of a wonderful deep blue, and yet there was nothing to suggest a madonna. The little snub nose, the braids wound about her head not without coquetry, the whole roguish, rather pert expression of the rosy little face did not harmonize with that. And yet the young girl was a beauty that attracted at the first glance. The best proof of this fact was given by the young man himself. For the first glance that he gave his traveling companion, there

followed a second, a third and at length for minutes at a time, and in fact all the time when she did not seem to notice it, he was lost in admiration of her charms.

Soon after she entered the compartment he had tried to enter into a conversation with her. But the attempt failed. He had asked her in the most courteous manner whether she wanted him to open the window, as he had smoked shortly before—which, of course, he would discontinue now. She had answered merely in an embarrassed way, "If you please," and had grown very red. Then she had looked at the man with some mistrust, had continued her observation of him quietly in the way mentioned, and yet did not reach a definite result. This all happened more quickly than we can tell it. Finally she drew back in the farthest corner of the compartment diagonally opposite her companion, but not before she had formed a kind of barricade between them of the boxes and packages. Whether the formation of this barrier was intentional or not is uncertain. Undoubtedly the world is pictured in a fantastic way in the little head of a boarding-school girl, and who knows why she considered her precautionary measures necessary? Was it not an adventure already that she found the ladies' compartment filled, and was obliged to make the journey of only two hours and a half, to be sure, for her destination was at no greater distance, with a young man? He was courteous and obliging, but that was probably a sure sign of his dangerousness. Might he not be a Don Juan, an importunate fellow, one of those people who stupefy their victims with chloroform in order to rob them? She had read much about such things and her vivid imagination probably colored at this moment in her soul the gloomy side of the railway romance in the most glaring tints.

When the young man noticed her defensive preparations he was obliged to smile; then he took out his note-book and began to turn over its pages earnestly. It seemed as though he had the philanthropic intention to give the young lady the strongest proof of his harmlessness by taking no more notice of her.

This attitude was evidently not without effect; for now the pretty girl began to look, though furtively, over her book towards her vis-à-vis, who sat there as calm and gentle as a lamb. No, he was not one of those railway scoundrels she had so often heard described in the newspapers. Now she was almost ashamed of the ridiculous wall of bandboxes that

she had formed between them, and when one of the boxes, at a slight motion of the car, fell to the floor, she did not replace

it on the others, but put it in the net above her seat. When she saw the young man fully occupied with his own

affairs and taking no notice of her she thought she could give herself up to her own reflections. They must have been of a very sad nature, for she pressed the bunch of forget-me-nots several times to her heart, and opened and glanced over a letter that she had taken from the pocket of her dress, and presently began to sob gently.

The young man, who had been deep in the perusal of his book, raised his head and glanced at the weeping girl. How pretty, how doubly attractive she was in her tears! One could see how gladly he would have asked about the cause of her grief, so sympathetically did he look at her across the formidable rampart of boxes. A diffident question hovered on his lips, but he repressed it quickly in order not to seem indiscreet. Then she dried her tears and as her look met his questioning eyes a deep flush spread over her charming little face. She hastily concealed the letter and tried to put herself on her guard.

This sudden change did not escape the young man; he again turned to the pages of his note-book, while the young girl looked out at the smiling spring landscape.

Some minutes passed thus. The express train that passed by most of the smaller stations, had gradually quickened its speed. "How they flew to the right, how they flew to the left, the mountains, trees and hedges," runs an old ballad; so it was here. Villages, little towns and places appeared and then disappeared rapidly; the telegraph poles rushed past the windows in a trice, like long-legged specters. At last the car got into a peculiar wavering, jostling motion; it seemed as though the wheels must jump the track each instant. The jerks became stronger and then—as a result of a fresh jolt—the whole stately pasteboard edifice toppled to the floor.

The young girl started up from her reveries in fright and looked in consternation at the ruins at her feet. She rose quickly and seized one box after another in order to put them all in the net made of cord, high above on the wall of the compartment. A work that was not without difficulties at this moment, for the jostling and jolting had not only not ceased, but had even increased; so that our little traveler had difficulty in keeping her balance, and lo! at the moment that she had quite demolished her artificial little rampart, she was, of course, quite unintentionally thrown by a violent jolt onto the seat directly opposite her ostensible enemy.

She grew quite pale, and real anxiety spread over her childish features. What she feared was not difficult to guess; she clung almost convulsively with her little hands to the window frame of the compartment. She evidently believed that the train would leave the track any minute.

The young man followed her movements furtively and was obliged to smile at the chance that had forced her to overstep the line of demarcation. He said nothing, but it seemed to him that now she felt the need of beginning a conversation with him. He had not calculated wrongly.

As the jolting of the car did not cease the young girl, quite beside herself, called out, looking at the young man almost entreatingly:

"Goodness, are we running off the track?"

"Don't be alarmed!" said the traveler smiling, and with as much benevolence in his tone and expression as possible. "This shaking means nothing, I know from a long experience in traveling. We both have the misfortune of being in the last car, which always feels it the most severely on express trains. Perhaps the rails are a little bad, and moreover our car has the brake, and these are causes enough to explain this jolting, which is disagreeable, but I assure you quite harmless. At the first station I will try, however, to find you a place in a better compartment, if you desire."

The manner in which he spoke had something that aroused one's confidence. He was certainly a good man who offered to do this so pleasantly. His friendly offer of getting her another compartment proved clearly that he had no secret designs against her, but on the contrary thought only of her welfare. She blamed herself greatly for her precautionary measures, which must have been very amusing to the stranger, and said, as she made herself comfortable on the seat she had involuntarily taken opposite him: "Thank you very much; I prefer to stay here. I am not going far."

The motion of the train had gradually become slower, now the signal whistle of the locomotive sounded and a few moments later the train rolled into a station. The young girl rose, opened the window, and asked a passing conductor: "How much longer is it to D.?"

"Two hours," was the answer.

"Two hours," she repeated taking her place again. "That is a long time."

"You are evidently not accustomed to traveling, are you?" asked the young man.

"No. From D., where I am going, to L., where I got in or the reverse, is my longest journey. It is no pleasure to be cooped up in such a compartment. I feel like a bird in a cage."

"You are right," said the traveler, laughing, while the train again started off. "But one could endure the captivity, if one could only retain the impressions one gets on the way. For instance, a beautiful grove of trees, a group of rocks, a picturesque ravine in the forest, a dreamy lake—the eye would like to feast on, but in a flash the beautiful picture has vanished, to make way for another quite without charm."

How well he could talk! A traveling companion who had so much susceptibility for nature's beauties could only be a well-bred and honorable man! And now he quoted a verse of a German poet, a verse she knew very well, and that had also been written in her album by a friend's dainty hand. He must have read her thoughts, for she nodded to him in a friendly way as he ended. Then he began again:

"Yes; the true poetry of traveling is lost on the railroad. Give me a journey in an open carriage or, better still, wandering on foot in beautiful countries such as Switzerland or Italy. One is free and can stop at any moment when the glance is chained by something attractive; it is a real pleasure to travel so because one often draws from the trifling and insignificant the greatest stimulus for the mind and the soul!"

"You have been in Italy?" she whispered, and looked at him with an expression of wonder.

"Oh, yes," he answered, "more than once. This wonderland is always the goal of my longing for travel, and when I can get away I visit Italy once a year. I travel in the most agreeable company; we—that is my two friends and I—are usually accustomed to travel together. One is a painter, the other a poet; for both——"

"Oh, how splendid!" she exclaimed enthusiastically. "How you are to be envied!"

"For the journey or for the company in which I make it?" he asked smilingly.

"For one as much as the other," was her answer.

"It is true," he said, "my two friends are companions that leave nothing to be desired for such a land. For both Italy is a treasure, the journey has a fruitful effect on their creative

spirits. Yes, I myself dabble a little in the calling of one of them, the artist, and always return with a number of my own sketches or copies, which remain as a precious reminder of what I enjoyed. Do you draw, too?"

"A little," she answered, embarrassed.

"And you are interested in art and artists? Ah, that is good. You will probably also go to Italy some time," he added, roguishly; "perhaps also in the company of an artist."

"I— how could I——" she added, blushing a little.

"Why not?" he exclaimed, keeping up his joking tone. "Is it then so impossible, that you—for example, as the wife of a painter or poet—should visit the famous land at his side?"

She blushed still more. She had quietly considered him for a long time as a kind of artist, and would have liked very much to have asked him about his profession in order to make sure of this point. Now, after his remarks, she knew very well this would not do; she would have been dreadfully ashamed to make any allusion to it. She sighed imperceptibly and then after a short pause she said with charming earnestness that was not without a touch of drollery:

"Of course you are only joking. In truth—if I dared choose whom I would——"

She was silent, and her little fingers played with the tassel of the strap which served to raise the compartment window. It seemed as though she regretted having said too much already.

"Well," he asked, laughing, looking at her closely, "if you could choose?"

She again looked at him with a certain shy mistrust. Then she said:

"I believe it is not proper that I talk about such things with you."

"Why not?" he answered heartily. "But as you like. But rest assured my question was quite harmless. If it is not agreeable to you to answer it, let us not speak of it any more. But—you are laughing——"

She was indeed laughing. The tone in which he spoke had something unusually warm and confidence inspiring in it. Gradually the former roguishness returned to her countenance and now she answered him with a cheerfulness that seemed almost excessive:

"What should I have answered to your question? No artist has wooed me yet."

Now the laugh was on him. "That means nothing!" he exclaimed merrily. "Let us suppose the case—a case," he added gallantly, "that I consider very possible, that a whole row of young men of different vocations are suing for your hand, and that among the wooers was a charming artist—would you—pardon me, if I am too curious—would you not give the artist the preference?"

She laughed to herself, made a wry mouth, and surveyed him with all the roguishness that was native to her. What had they come to? Was it nice to answer such an artful question? And of what consequence could the answer be to him? Was he himself, as she more and more suspected, an artist? Would he perhaps explain her sentiment and opinion probably in relation to his own person? These thoughts passed through her mind with lightning speed, and she considered how she ought to dismiss the gallant cavalier in the most correct manner. Finally she thought she had found out a very subtile answer. Subtile, because in her opinion it was as dark as the sayings of the Delphic oracle. She sat up erect and said, still laughing softly:

"Indeed, you put a difficult case. But who has said A must also say B, and I should not have been drawn into this if I had not wished to answer. But what is the odds? The time passes in chatting. At all events it has the good effect of making one forget the intolerable jolting of the car. Oh! how it sways hither and thither again! Well, I shall tell you the truth. You ask whether I should like to marry an artist? Well, I think that depends most of all upon whether this artist pleases me as a man."

These last words were uttered with especial emphasis, while she looked at him, smiling, "and so I cannot answer your question definitely. But I shall tell you whom I should not like to marry. Do you want to know whom I should not marry for anything in the world? A merchant."

He had listened to her naïve explanation with great interest. Her final remark, however, seemed to have affected him particularly. Curious to know the ground of her strange antipathy to the mercantile class, he asked hastily:

"What have you against tradespeople? I know very good and agreeable men of this class."

"Good men," she repeated, and a trace of scorn was evident in her face. "Good—that may be But agreeable? No!"

"What a strange aversion!" he exclaimed, laughing heartily. "If you think all tradespeople disagreeable, probably you have had some experiences in this respect that——"

"Experiences?" she interrupted. "Yes—no—as you like. But I shall not argue with you, perhaps you yourself——" she stopped, a little embarrassed. "Let us leave tradespeople," she added, smilingly. "I will gladly let them pass if I only need not marry one of them."

After this explanation he again broke out in a loud, merry laugh. "That is rare," he exclaimed, "that you thus arm yourself against the mere possibility of marrying a merchant. Perhaps you think that a merchant cannot be a good husband?"

"Yes," she said, decidedly, "that is just what I do think. And I have had experience, not by myself, but in others. For instance—but I am talking far too much——"

"Please, please, go on."

"Well, what difference does it make?"

She began again, after she had looked at him critically. The result of this test must have been favorable, for she smiled at him merrily, and continued: "For instance—I said, for instance, there is my father. He is a merchant and banker, and ranks among the first in D. Well, what did I want to prove to you—that merchant folk do not make good husbands? Papa is thoroughly good. He loves mamma and me tenderly, but where business begins, and unfortunately it is always beginning, never to cease—then—then——"

"Well?"

"Then there is no use talking with him. How often have I heard mamma say, sighing, 'He does not exist for his family at all. He is always in a state of excitement, his attention is always claimed by things that estrange him from us.' Yes, it is really so! Papa lives only for his business. He is reckoning and calculating from morning till evening, and so the days pass. His humor is not to be depended upon—it fluctuates as the market and exchange fluctuate. If they rise, he is friendly and in high spirits; if they fall, he is in a disagreeable mood—the case is often so—no, no, say what you will, I keep to my point—the wife of a man whose mood depends on the exchange list is not to be envied."

The little mouth trembled with a feeling of annoyance, and a shade of curious sadness passed over her clear brow, so that it seemed that she was especially moved by this theme they had

touched upon. He had difficulty to control his laughter in listening to her droll argument; however, he was quite aware of her inward depression and in order not to vex or embarrass her he tried his best to be serious. At this moment the train rolled slowly into the station. The young girl rose and called out of the window: "How long a time now to D.?"

"An hour and a quarter," the conductor answered.

"An hour and a quarter," she repeated in a low tone as though to herself. "So long yet and—and—ah!"

Her voice quivered gently at the last words. She sighed

deeply, took out her handkerchief and pressed it to her eyes. When she sank into her place, as the train rolled off at this moment, she again flushed, for she thought that he had observed her.

"I must seem very strange," she said, gently and in charming confusion.

"Strange?" he said, while his look rested on her with an expression of the heartiest good-will. "Strange—no, indeed! But I noticed before that you are sad and——"

"I have reasons for it," she interrupted, and sighed deeply.

"Reasons? You? That certainly seems strange to me," he said, smiling.

"Why?" she asked quickly.

"Because a young lady like you ought only to have reasons for joy."

"Ought—ought!" she said, impetuously. "You are mistaken. One can be sad too, when one is young."

"That is just what I am surprised about," he answered, looking at her more attentively, for the unusual earnestness that was more and more apparent in her face struck him. "However you are right. In youth, too, one may go through much that is painful. We are," he continued with greater warmth, for he noticed that she again sighed deeply, "we are strangers to each other, to be sure, but I assure you that it would be a great delight to me if I could comfort you. Perhaps you have received bad news? Do not think me indiscreet, but I thought I saw that when you were reading a letter a little while ago——"

"You —you saw——" she cried, startled.

"I do not wish to be intrusive," he said, "I only wanted——"

"The letter—no—I—that is," she murmured in embarrassment.

"Well, I am glad that I was mistaken," he said, with jovial kindness. "Perhaps—will you permit me to be still a little curious?"

She nodded confusedly.

"Perhaps it was only the parting from your friends whom you left in L., that saddened you."

"No, no," she answered, laughing. "If it only were that! But I understand very well why you think so. The young girls whom you saw are, of course, my friends and classmates from the boarding-school of Mrs. Willmer in L., whom I have parted from to-day forever. I was there five years, and now I am going home to—to—but that is of no concern. To be sure the parting has touched me. Ah! we were very happy, my friends and I. You do not know how pleasant it is to live in such an institute, and Mrs. Willmer was a delightful principal. How many happy hours and days I have spent there! We girls had our little and great secrets in common, our surprises, our ideals——"

"Your ideals?" he interrupted her, laughing.

"Yes. Are you surprised at that?" she said almost indignantly. "Cannot we girls have our ideals? Everyone has his ideal. It is unfortunate, at least, if he has not. One dreams of a future as one wishes—the more beautiful the better. Those are our ideals, and you—have you not an ideal, too?"

"Certainly, certainly!" he exclaimed, with difficulty suppressing a laugh. "But do go on."

"Why go on?" she said, shaking her head sadly. "It is all over."

"But are you not happy to go back to your parent's house, into the midst of your own people?" he pursued, curiously.

"Yes and no," she replied in evident embarrassment, and lowered her eyes. "I am happy to see papa and mamma again, if—if only——"

She stopped.

"It is better to drop this conversation," she continued, after a pause, "and there is the locomotive whistle again. What! are we in D. already?"

The train stopped in a new station. The conductor opened the window of the compartment. "Forty-five minutes yet to D.!" he exclaimed, without waiting for the girl's question.

"Only forty-five minutes more," she repeated. "How quickly the time has passed in talking!"

"So quickly," said the young man, "that I myself am surprised that we are so near the end of our journey."

"Of *our* journey? Are you going to D., too?"

"Yes," he affirmed. "And the short, pleasant hours that I have passed in your society," he added, gallantly, "have made me quite forget the tiresomeness of the beginning of my journey."

"Have you been on the way a long time?" she asked.

"Since this morning." I came from H., where I live."

"From H.!" she exclaimed, in evident astonishment, and looked at him hard. "How remarkable!"

"But there is nothing very extraordinary about a man traveling from H. to D.," he said, laughing.

Her face again became crimson at his words. He was quite aware that she struggled with her confusion, for she turned her head to the window to avoid his look. At this moment the train rolled out of the station, and a few moments passed in perfect silence between the fellow travelers. Suddenly she turned her head and said:

"You must think me exceedingly foolish."

"Foolish!" he exclaimed in surprise. "How can you think that——"

"Yes, very foolish. I mean on account of my amazement that you are from H. But something occurred to me that interested me and—and——"

"And?"

"And I should like to ask you if you know a gentleman there named Alfred Brüning?" she said, suddenly.

"Al—Alfred Brüning?" said the young man, starting up impetuously. "Do I know Alfred Brüning? The merchant, Alfred Brüning," he added, pronouncing the word merchant in an especially sharp tone of irony. "Yes, indeed, I do know him."

"You know him?" she said quickly and evidently in great excitement.

"Yes, indeed," he affirmed, laughing, and a certain roguishness gleamed in his eyes; "he is my best friend."

"Your best friend," she said. "I am very glad of it."

"You are very glad of it," exclaimed the young man, to whom his charming neighbor began to seem enigmatical. She let her pretty head sink in thought for a few moments, then she raised it quickly, as though a sudden thought had come to her, and while a mischievous smile trembled about her mouth, she said firmly:

"Yes, I am glad of it. And I shall tell you why. Mr. Alfred Brüning will soon go to D. with the view of becoming engaged to a good friend of mine——"

"To a good friend of yours?"

"Yes. But you ought to know that if you are his best friend."

"Hm—hm—that is so," he replied, almost embarrassed, "he has told me of it. But how is it——"

"Let me finish. When you mentioned that you were from H., I was at once curious to find out more about this Alfred Brüning. But, of course, only for my friend's sake. You must know that the poor Clara—I shall test you and see whether your friend has initiated you into his secrets. What is Clara's surname?"

"Hübner," he said, with an odd smile.

"Right!" she laughed, pleasantly. "Well, you must know that my poor Clara has long been a party to the marriage

plot which they have formed against her. She has, in fact, the good luck in all misfortune to have a faithful ally in a dear old aunt, who lives in the Hübner house. Aunt Regina knows all, hears all. She is unmarried, and as she is opposed to men in general, as a matter of course, she has taken Clara's part against the unwelcome wooer. 'Why marry?' she says in the family councils. 'Clara is still far too young; there is time enough, and one ought not be in too great a hurry.' Ah, she is so right, the dear aunt. And she did not stop at that; she has written—I mean to say, told her poor niece in detail what secret designs they had, so that she can arm herself as well as she can. Clara, in fact, was to be forced to a certain extent to enter this alliance without any regard to her wishes and inclination. The plan has been in preparation a long time. Clara's father, the Councillor Hübner, is a true merchant, and from his point of view I find it quite intelligible that his choice falls upon this Mr. Brüning, who is a great merchant in H. Who cares about the poor girl's heart? Let it break, if only the detestable match brings in much money. Aunt Regina says so, too; people have lost all thought of the ideal, she says, and that is why she did not marry. Nowadays everything is looked upon as business——"

"Is it possible, is it possible!" exclaimed the young man, who had had one surprise after another.

"Unfortunately, it is just as I tell you," she said with a lively zeal, and in an excitement that made her little face still more enchanting than the former roguishness. "But I can assure you, and you will do well to tell your friend so, when you see him again, Clara will never say yes with her heart, and if she is forced to marry Mr. Brüning will be very, very unhappy."

She had spoken the last words with the most solemn pathos, and the young man, whose interest in her communication had increased from minute to minute, did not seem to be very agreeably affected by it. If she had looked at him more closely she would have noticed how he suddenly bit his lips, that a faint flush, for a moment only, spread over his pale face, and at the same time his expression, which was formerly so friendly and bright, darkened a little. However, he soon regained his self-control, and said, with a peculiar smile:

"Your news has surprised me greatly. But do explain to me how you——"

"How I know all this, you mean? Well, from Clara's own mouth. She does not conceal anything from me. When we saw each other recently, she confessed to me. Indeed, she is my best friend."

"May I ask you then, in the interest of my friend Alfred, on what is the prejudice of the young lady, against one whom she does not know at all, founded?"

"Whom she does not know at all!" exclaimed the young girl almost unconsciously, and an expression of scorn and dislike hovered around her lips. "It is just that that is so detestable."

"Mr. Alfred Brüning will come, will be introduced, will repeat his visits a few times, and then feign a liking that he does not feel at all. We poor girls know better! We know that everything has long been arranged between the houses of Hübner and Brüning, like any ordinary business. Mamma and papa will at last question poor Clara closely, put before her the advantages of the match, persuade her that Mr. Alfred Brüning is a charming man, and if she does not want to be disobedient she will finally have to be bartered away. Naturally, that does not trouble Mr. Alfred Brüning; he is himself a merchant, and he only asks how much benefit——"

"You exaggerate," he interrupted her.

"I am not exaggerating," she said, very decidedly. "Do you know how I picture this Mr. Alfred Brüning? As a very dull, sober man, who looks after his own interests. Now he will wander about among his barrels, bales and goods, or bend over his books in his office and calculate how great his gains will be through a rich marriage. Is it not so? You shake your head, but it is so."

During the last words her face had assumed an expression of pouting defiance. At last she was silent, and drew a deep breath, as though a burden had dropped from her heart with her confession.

"I have let you keep on speaking," the young man now began, and a strange earnestness sounded in his voice, "and I think your indignation quite just. Still I must tell you that you are quite mistaken about my friend. It is true he is a merchant and likes his calling, and that is sufficient to let him find no mercy in your and your friend's eyes. Whether he is now going about among his bales and goods or is bending over his account books," he added with gentle irony, "of course I do not know, but I do know that he will abandon his wooing of Miss

Clara if she does not feel any affection for him, and he does not for her."

He pronounced the last words with peculiar emphasis. She looked at him in amazement, and shook her head mistrustfully. But the stranger's explanation seemed to have impressed her a little.

"You are certainly not speaking in earnest," she said. "That would be the first merchant who——"

"Your antipathy makes you unjust," he interrupted, smiling. "But suppose we let the merchant rest, and speak of the man. Now, I know the man Alfred Brüning as well as myself, and I assure you once more that the marriage of which you spoke will never take place without true affection on both sides."

"You are sure of that?" she cried almost triumphantly. "Oh, that would be splendid! But you have made me doubly curious. What a rara avis is this Mr. Alfred Brüning, that he—although——"

"Now you are prejudiced again," he laughed, "and so you make an entirely false picture of my friend. He has a heart that is warm for all that is high, noble, and beautiful. Yes, he also has his ideals, as you have."

"He has his ideals?" she cried with more intense interest. "Quick, quick, tell me a little more about him."

He was silent a moment. "Indeed, I do not know," he said at last hesitatingly and with his former gentle laugh, "whether I can be answerable to my friend for praising him. He does not like people to make any ado about him."

"What am I to tell you?" he began again. "The truth—well! I can tell you the truth. Alfred Brüning is—although a merchant—an arch-idealist. He can become rapturously enthusiastic—for instance, for the arts."

"He is enthusiastic," she cried, evidently gratified and with growing interest, "for the arts——"

"Especially for music. He plays, not badly for a dilettante, piano and violin. In his house—I am, in fact, his greatest friend——"

"Oh, go on; do go on!"

"In his house certain evenings of the week the best artists of the city come together—his friends. There is music. You undoubtedly know the beautiful quartets and trios of our greatest artists?"

"Oh, yes, yes—we went regularly to all the concerts in L."

"He also loves drawing and painting. I have already told you—pardon me—I meant to say, that my friend, like myself, goes every year to Italy on account of his interest for art and beautiful nature. In short, Alfred Brüning is by no means a merchant of the kind you picture to yourself."

He was silent and looked at her smiling. He seemed to have touched her especially by the conclusion of his speech. She looked at the floor in confusion, and he thought he could clearly read a certain shame in her features.

At last she raised her head and looked at him. A question trembled on her lips, but she seemed to have difficulty in uttering it. "Would you please tell me about how Mr. Alfred Brüning looks?" she finally asked, shyly.

"How he looks?" he asked, smiling. "Do you mean his figure or his face——"

"I mean, is he handsome?" she said with charming naïvete.

"Handsome!" he exclaimed, laughing. "Handsome!—No—I don't know. Look at me. He has about the same stature as I. He also resembles me in face—many would take us for brothers."

"Well, you don't look in the least like a merchant," she said gaily, but at once dropped her eyes in confusion.

"I thank you in my friend's name, for this avowal, which, indeed, in your mouth, has the significance of a very flattering compliment. But now for a counter question. What does your friend Clara look like? Is she tall and slender, is she blonde or brunette, is her face gay or earnest, is she——"

"What Clara is like—aha!"

"Are you laughing?"

"Aha—what Clara is like!"

"Why do you laugh?"

"Because—because—it is too funny——"

"I beg you——"

"Do not ask me—I—I—I cannot—aha!"

At this moment the locomotive whistle sounded. The last forty-five minutes of their journey had passed, and suddenly the train stopped in a brightly lighted station. He had in the meantime tried to find out the cause of her laughter, without getting an explanation. Now she stood up by the window and looked out on the platform. Among the rather large number of people waiting was a stout, elderly man, whose searching glance flew from one compartment door to another. Sud-

denly he perceived the young girl at the window, and almost immediately the newcomer was in his arms, and he was kissing her tenderly.

"God bless you, my child," he cried; "how gay and well you look. Go, Frederick," he said to the servant in livery standing back of him, "and take the lady's luggage from the compartment." Then, turning to the young girl, "But how beautiful you look! Did you travel alone? No—there is a gentleman. Goodness! What—what is this I see? Truly, it is actually you, old fellow—in the compartment with my daughter. What a curious coincidence!"

With these words he seized the hand of the young girl's traveling companion, who stood there in comical surprise and was looking first at the old man, then at the girl, and at last murmured:

"Why, sir, have I the honor—your daughter——"

"Papa," whispered the young girl, "will you be good enough to tell me who——"

"Who that is?" said the old man, gayly. "Don't you know? Still funnier! That is my business friend and the friend of our house, Mr. Alfred Brüning from H., who has come to—but I dare not talk out of school. Welcome, once more welcome, and now let us go on, children."

The two children looked at each other with an expression that is indescribable. Clara's cheeks were deeply flushed, while the young man, noticing her great embarrassment, began to smile in triumph.

# Lamp-Boy: A Tale of Bagdad, by Valentine Geere.*

WHEN the Germans run their railway to Bagdad, we may expect great changes to take place in the old city. Whether it will really benefit by those changes is an open question. For my own part, I must confess that I consider the railway project an utterly detestable one; but then I have a weakness for the picturesque, and hate the idea of dragoman-led parties of tourists flocking through the bazaars and narrow alleys. Imagine a sleek Syrian telling his tweed-clad, Bædeker-crammed flock, "This is the street where Morgiana lived, ladies and gentlemen; and here, on this door, is one of the chalkmarks which she made in order to baffle the forty thieves. It is rather faint now; but, of course, many hundreds of years have elapsed," etc.

Faugh! The thought is sickening; but it is satisfactory to realize that the tourist will never see the real city of the Arabian Nights. All that he will see will be a modernized version of it; he will sleep on specially imported beds, in a specially built hotel "replete with every modern convenience"; and when he walks abroad in the evening through the modernized streets the way will be lit for him by electric lamps. He will enjoy it all, doubtless, and think it "awfully quaint", as he does Cairo—modernized Cairo, with its electric trams and fashionable hotels. Quaint, save the mark! Thank heaven, he can never see anything truly quaint, because he never has energy enough to venture off the beaten track.

Of course, the Bagdad of to-day is not just the same as it was in Haroun el Rashid's time, but it has moved astonishingly slowly on the path of progress; and although steamboats run to the city from Busreh, and tramcars run from it to Kazmain, both boats and trams are delightfully antiquated and gloriously uncertain in their times of arrival and

*From Chambers's Journal.

departure. Lately, some street lamps—oil, of course—have made their appearance; but happily they are few and far between, and not sufficiently brilliant to put the glories of the past altogether in the shade. Pedestrians who venture abroad after sunset either carry a lamp themselves, have a servant to carry one for them, or make use of some other person's if they have the opportunity to do so. By all means it is advisable to have a light, for in winter the streets are full of mud-heaps, puddles, and pariahs, not to mention footpads; and in the summer scorpions are added to the list of things to be avoided. Everybody who pays any attention at all to appearances always has his *farnoosji* (lamp-boy) to walk ahead of him in the evening; and amongst the Europeans at least there exists quite a rivalry in the matter of the lamps and their carriers.

Not very many years ago, when the members of the British colony in the old city were nearly all bachelors, the lamp-boys were not only useful, but often actually indispensable; for after a bachelor dinner it was the duty of each *farnoosji* to sort his particular *sahib* out of the crowd of jovial diners and pilot him safely through the deserted streets to his own abode. Sometimes the work of the boys was rendered difficult by the reluctance of the *sahibs* to part with one another; very often the lively spirits displayed a reprehensible desire to argue with the watchman, or to interfere with the domestic arrangements of the groups of pariahs scattered about the streets, by introducing the juvenile members of the canine tribe into respectable houses where their presence was not desired; and not infrequently some wag with a destructive turn of mind would start the sport of lamp-smashing. At that stage of the proceedings the *farnoosjis* generally fled, and their masters had to follow in their wake, calling vainly on them to go more slowly. On such occasions the boy who got home with his lamp unbroken was regarded as a treasure by his master, and became the envy of his fellows. One youth who served a jolly engineer was regarded as a paragon. His lamp was a gorgeous affair. Like all the other lanterns, it was made with a tin frame, the material of which was obtained by the thrifty lamp-makers from old Batoum oil-cans; but its peculiarity lay in its great size and its magnificent display of glass. Two panes were white, one was green, and one red.

When his master was in a peaceful frame of mind the *farnoosji* showed the white light, when there was a chance of collision, the green light warned stragglers to look out, and when the red light was shown the watchmen and pariahs always discreetly left the coast clear for the engineer's progress. That lamp was never broken, and the *farnoosji* was the cynosure of the city.

However, this is a digression. My story concerns another lamp-boy and another *sahib*, whose conduct was always above suspicion, and who would never have had occasion to display the red danger-signal, even if his lamp had been provided with one—which it was not.

For the blameless life of Exe, the *sahib* in question, I should feel safe in going bail. Careless he may have been, but nothing worse. Whether the story concerning him that I am about to tell is absolutely true, I am unable to say. Exe himself would deny it forcibly, I know; but Bagdad has always been famous for strange happenings within its walls, as all readers of the Arabian Nights know full well. In fine,

> I cannot tell how the truth may be;
> I say the tale as 'twas said to me.

John Exe was a canny young Scot, who managed the Bagdad branch of a large British firm. He was a bachelor, and lived alone in a comfortable house by the river side. In business circles, native and European, he was looked up to and respected; and although he was of a rather staid turn of mind, he was well liked by all the European colony. His household was eminently respectable, and he enjoyed a freedom from domestic worries which made him the envy of his less fortunate fellows. For even in Bagdad the great "servant question" is not unknown, and I have frequently heard bachelors there express their opinions on it in language which the sorest-tried housekeeper in England would hesitate to use, however much she might feel like doing so.

Exe, however, enjoyed complete immunity from that bother, and his ménage was a pattern one. Like most Europeans, he selected as his servants native Christians from Talkaf, or Telkaif; and he owed much of his freedom from worry to the character of his cook, Yusuf, who ruled the underlings with a rod of iron. At first Yusuf had been somewhat hard to please in the matter of his fellow-servants;

but when his nephew Daoud took service as *sufragi*, or table-boy, and he had got hold of a hard-working youngster, Antoine, as *farnoosji* and errand-boy, everything ran smoothly. Envious tongues whispered darkly that Yusuf and Daoud were "as thick as thieves, and no wonder"; but Exe only smiled aggravatingly and pointed out that his orders were always carried out to the letter, and his peace never broken in upon with fights amongst the servants. He never heard of it if Antoine did get thrashed rather often, and he was not going out of his way to make trouble for himself.

For over two years "the happy family circle," as it was called, remained unbroken. Then one day Antoine told Exe that he wished to leave. Pressed for a reason, he became confused and incoherent, but he stuck to his determination doggedly; and as Yusuf volunteered to find a boy to fill his place without any trouble, Exe let the youngster go and wished him luck.

True to his promise, the cook looked out a new boy, whose name, he said, was Nahim; and Exe accepted him on the understanding that Yusuf was answerable for his good conduct. The youngster was rather good-looking; but Exe barely noticed his appearance, being particularly short-sighted. However, he could not fail to observe that the new boy was particularly timid, not to say cowardly, and that he held himself much aloof from the other lamp-boys. Yusuf explained this by saying that Nahim had only lately come to Bagdad, and was shy at first; and, to Exe's great surprise, the martinet showed wonderful forbearance towards the neophyte, treating him with unwonted indulgence, and overlooking his faults times out of number. Never once did the tones of anger rise from the courtyard to the roof, where Exe dined and slept after the usual summer custom in Bagdad; and more marvelous still, Yusuf used to send Daoud with the lamp to fetch his master home when he dined out. Nahim might carry the lamp when the *sahib* left his own house; but he never waited in the courtyard as the other *farnoosjis* did; and if Exe was late, he invariably found Daoud, instead of Nahim, waiting for him when he was ready to return home.

This was so altogether strange that Exe questioned Yusuf about it. The cook replied that Nahim was "a good boy," and did not like the ways and talk of the other lamp-boys; and since Daoud was glad to go out, he (Yusuf) thought it

better to let him do so under the circumstances, if the *sahib* did not object. He added that very soon Nahim would doubtless get over his shyness, and that, as he was in other respects a most desirable boy, it would be a pity to have the trouble of a change, possibly for the worse.

The explanation satisfied easy-going Exe, who was inclined to admire Nahim's taste in the matter of the other *farnoosjis;* and as Daoud heartily indorsed all that Yusuf had said, and declared that he really liked carrying the lantern, the young Scot troubled his head no further with the matter. Indeed, he had other thoughts to occupy his leisure moments, for his uncle, a retired Major of the Indian army, who was traveling for pleasure, was shortly expected on a visit; and as he was a rather fussy old gentleman, with a nice little sum of his own, and no other nephews or nieces, Exe was anxious to stand well in his eyes, and determined to make the visit a success in every way. The house was put in the smartest trim; Yusuf received so many instructions for the regulation of his own conduct and that of the other servants that he became irritable; and Exe's friends were warned not to offend against any of the Major's prejudices, and to avoid undue levity in their conversation. In fact, the anxious nephew endeavored to provide against all possibility of mishap by the exercise of forethought and caution remarkable even in a Scot.

In due course of time, Major Wise arrived, and took up his quarters in the riverside house. He was a tall, well set up old gentleman, and, so long as his will was not crossed, a delightful companion; but during his long service in India, he had acquired a pronounced "Indian liverishness," and when his temper was once aroused he became perfectly unbearable. He expressed himself delighted to find his nephew succeeding so well in business, and so comfortably quartered, and hinted broadly that, although John would have done much better to enter the army, the fact that he was a merchant should not adversely affect his standing in the Major's will. For Bagdad as a city he professed a hearty contempt, declaring that the place and its inhabitants were both confoundedly in need of cleansing. "It wants the British here, my boy," he said to John, "to make 'em sit up. But these Arabs, or Turks, or whatever you call 'em, would never make soldiers. We could never lick 'em into shape, as we have the Sikhs and sepoys.

And as for your confounded servants—Talkaifs you call 'em, don't you?—they are beneath contempt."

John agreed with the old gentleman, but pointed out that they were the best obtainable, even if they were a poor best. He added that he would have been glad to get Indian servants if he could have handled them, but that the expense, and his own ignorance of how to manage them, prevented his trying the experiment. This implied compliment to his particular pets and his own experience flattered the Major, and he was wonderfully amiable for the rest of that evening.

Next morning, however, his liver was out of order, and he was consequently in a most atrocious temper. He declared that the cook was an utter fool, who would poison any respectable person in no time; and when Daoud accidentally dropped some tobacco in his bath whilst filling it, the Major swore at him roundly and forbade him ever to enter his room again. Later on, he requested Exe to give instructions that in future Nahim was to prepare his morning tub and look after his wants. Of course, the nephew readily acquiesced, and issued his orders to Yusuf. The cook hastily offered to wait upon the Major himself; but Exe firmly ordered him to carry out his instructions to the letter on pain of instant dismissal. Yusuf turned sulky, but he yielded the point, and for the next three days Nahim filled the Major's bath, brushed his clothes, and acted as his valet. Apparently he gave satisfaction, for the old gentleman was most amiable; but sometimes Exe fancied his uncle was thinking deeply over some matter, and once or twice he noticed him looking intently at Nahim in a puzzled way. Once he observed, "John, these servants of yours are a queer lot. They look confoundedly womanish in these *ziboons*. Why don't you put 'em into a uniform?" John explained that native prejudice was too strong to combat, and the Major let the matter drop, with a disapproving grunt.

Next morning Exe was aroused from his deep slumbers by the sounds of an angry altercation in the courtyard below. Anxious that his irascible uncle should not be disturbed, he hurried out onto the balcony which overlooked the court, intending to stop the hubbub at once. But it was some time before he could make himself heard over the angry voices of Yusuf and Daoud.

Evidently the trouble was serious, for he could see that the

cook and Daoud were actually at blows, while Nahim was apparently trying vainly to separate them. As he had not got his glasses on, Exe could not make out quite clearly what was going on in the dim morning light; but he shouted indignantly to the combatants to be quiet. Then he became aware that his uncle had appeared on the scene. The Major presented a decidedly strange appearance, clad in thin pajamas, which clung limply to his lean figure, and with his cheeks sunk in, owing to his not having stopped to put in his false teeth.

"What's the matter?" he shouted; and then, as his eye fell on the struggling group in the courtyard, he dashed excitedly to the steps, calling on John to follow. Uncle and nephew arrived just in time to prevent a tragedy. For Yusuf had succeeded in throwing Daoud to the ground, and was in the act of clearing his right arm for a stroke with a long-bladed, ugly knife, when the Major grasped him firmly by the wrist, and at the same time dealt him a blow behind the ear which sent him sprawling and very nearly stunned him.

"Now, then, what is the meaning of all this?" demanded the old gentleman when he had secured the knife. Then turning to John, he added sternly, "See, sir, this is what comes of your keeping this girl in your house. Perhaps you'll explain. I can't talk their confounded lingo, so I can't ask *them*."

"Girl?" said John blankly. "Girl?" Then his eye fell on Nahim, and his jaw dropped in horror.

"Yes, sir; girl, I said," snapped the Major. "Will you explain, or am I to stand here in this state all day?"

"But I never knew he—she—was a girl, uncle, really, until this minute."

"A likely story, sir. Don't try to fool me any longer. I insist on your asking these fellows and the young woman for an explanation and translating it to me fully. It is due to the fair name of the family, you—you young hypocrite; and, damme, sir! I insist."

The old fire-eater was not to be trifled with, and Exe hastened to obey his orders. Yusuf was too dazed and too furious to speak intelligibly, Nahim was choked with sobs, and Daoud was the only one capable of making himself understood. His version was that Yusuf, having married lately, had planned to get his wife into the house, and had made it worth his (Daoud's) while to aid and abet him. The

girl, whose real name was Marek, was not known in the Talkaif colony, as she had only lately come to Bagdad; and, therefore, Yusuf had not found his scheme utterly impracticable. Then the lady had shown a disposition to coquette with Daoud; and that morning when they were indulging in a little interchange of pleasantries, Yusuf had come upon them suddenly, and had lost his temper, with the results known to the *sahibs*.

"Ha! A pretty tale, indeed," snorted the Major. "But it won't go down with me, sir. The idea of trying to fool me with such falsehoods. As if you did not know all about the girl. Your cook's wife—eh? Don't tell me! I don't believe you are such a fool as to let your cook be master here; but I do believe that this precious baggage is mistress. Gad, sir! you've tried to fool me, and I won't forget it. This very day I shall leave by the steamer for Busreh, and I never wish to hear from you, or of you, again."

"Look here, uncle," cried the exasperated Exe, "it is all very well for you to talk like that. Of course I have been a fool; but I fail to see what *you* have to complain of."

"What, sir?" thundered the Major. "What? Has not this precious boy—girl, I mean—filled my bath every day? You can fill in the details of the picture for yourself, no doubt, since you seem to possess a decidedly lively imagination. I am a modest man, as you ought to know, and I shall never be able to think of Bagdad without blushing. Damme, sir! it was a bad day's work for me when I came here, and for you too—as you will find out later on. I admit that I had some slight suspicions two or three days ago, in consequence of—ahem—a little incident of which I will not speak; but I fought against them for your sake, and your mother's—my sister, sir. Now I see that I have been deceived. Well, I shall shake the dust of this place from my feet this very day. As soon as I can get dressed I shall go on board the steamer, and you will be left to enjoy the society of your—ah!—friends here, free from all restraint."

Without another word, he turned and strode off up the stairs full of the dignity of conscious rectitude, although his pajamas were flapping round him at each step in a ludicrous manner. After a helpless glance around, Exe followed him sadly and silently, while Daoud and Yusuf glared at one another over the head of the sobbing lamp-"boy."

# FRIENDLY Fates: A Tale of the Sea Coast, by S. Elgar Benet.*

THE house stood with its back to the sea, and its low door and one small window facing the street, beyond which lay a strip of rusty grass and the shining flood of the bay; around it the sand swept in broad stretches deepening as it reached the walls, where it drifted across the threshold to the room within.

To the left, in the sun, was set the squirrels' cage, with the smooth creatures whirling the flashing wheels and whisking in and out of their nests, and every day for as long as she could remember Milcah Tirzell had fed and cared for them until she found them almost as companionable as people.

She was a thin girl with hair the color of the sand and eyes that changed from blue to gray like the sea. She was shy and timid, afraid of the boats and afraid of a gun. She had no greeting for the fishermen as they went up and down, and not one of them cared to notice that Tirzell's girl had reached the early maturity of the beach woman.

It was different when Marr came over from the main. If he had been born among them he would, perhaps, have read love by another's eyes and passed Milcah as carelessly as the rest. He saw her before he had time to be influenced by his fellows' impressions, and he liked her small, straight figure, her voice and the blush with which she met his frank admiration.

The Marrs had once been people of possessions; now a Jerseyman owned their land along the bay shore, which he had bought at a tax sale; he had leveled the overgrown graves in the burial plot and made footpaths of the discolored stones

*Written for Short Stories.

to landing and stable. Nothing grew on the desecrated spot, and it remained spring after spring a barren square in the midst of growing green.

Aver Marr in his tumble-down house further up the bay was satisfied that Struven should be tormented with ague and rheumatism and tortured with a heart that kept his lips blue and made him cry out with pain. He believed it was his punishment for a general meanness. Later he was confirmed in this belief when Struven entered into rivalry with him and paid his court to old Tirzell as the speediest way of winning his daughter.

When Marr brought the girl a rose from his weedy door-yard where roses still bloomed stragglingly, Struven brought the old man a pipe or a bag of Sweet Navy Tobacco; and if Marr gave her a ribbon, Struven gave her father a kerchief for his neck, or a strip of bacon, and Struven was the favored suitor.

After Milcah was sure she had a lover, according to the custom of Croy maids, she went for further warrant to the wise woman who lived alone beyond the houseboats and cottages.

All Judy Kilgour's life ran into the making of nets, and she sat in her dull room like a fate who weaves and weaves an endless thread.

Milcah crossed the beach in a rain that drifted seaward. She peered through the window to make sure that Judy was alone before she rattled the latch.

"Who's there?" cried Judy.

"Me."

"Come in, can't you?"

There was a stove in front of the fireplace, a table under the window, and heaped in corners and packed against the walls were bundles of gray twine for those horny hands to knot.

Judy was tall and bent from forty years of stooping over her work. Her eyes were dark and her face was bleached from long confinement.

Milcah took a basket from under her shawl:

"They've brought in the first sturgeon this morning," she said, "and Mr. Struven fetched father a good piece. Maybe you want some."

"It's a bad night to come out in just to fetch a body a bit o' sturgeon meat. How many did they get?"

"Five; three rows. That's good for the first haul."

"It's the nets. If Small'd get his nets from the land knows where, he'd see what they'd bring in."

She glanced now and then at the girl who sat on a heap of twine and twisted the wet fringe of her shawl, and when she had worked three times across her net she threw her shuttle aside, climbed up on a chair to reach a sugar bowl on the top shelf of her cupboard, and took from it a worn pack of cards with blue currants on the back.

Milcah sat down at the end of the table.

"Shuffle three times and wish what you wish the most," said Judy.

Milcah shuffled the cards awkwardly; she was awed and she felt that a great opportunity was passing. She wanted to ask something great for Aver Marr, but she could think of nothing but his name; finally, to wish what would be sure to come true, she whispered:

"I wish I'll see Aver Marr to-morrow."

Judy spread the cards like a fan in her left hand; she frowned at them a long time before she assisted chance by means of knowledge:

"There's a man that's to his own thoughts about you. He's not a dark man nor a fair man. He's medium—medium dark an' medium fair. He's to his own thoughts about you an' matrimony an' a ring, an' he says as much to a dark man that's some kin to you. Here they are; they're at your house. Here's the house; he comes a journey to it, an' he's not real old, but he's not young, an' there's blackness an' deceit about him. He's got money—lots o' money; here it is all around him. He thinks about offerin' you a ring, but you turn your back on him and bear a good heart to'rds a fair man. Here's a bundle an' a letter an' a child. Seems like the child brings a letter. Three women' an three jacks. Deceit—deceit—deceit!"

She closed the cards and gave them back.

"Shuffle three times, make your wish an' keep your mind on what you're doin'."

Milcah's lips trembled as she repeated her wish.

Judy took up the thread of revelation:

"Here's a young man—a young, fair man; he's to his own thoughts about you. He bears you a very good heart an' he comes a journey from a distance with a bundle an' a ring,

an' it seems like the bundle's a present. He salutes you an' talks to you about matrimony; you listen with a good heart. Beware of the mediun dark man an' the three women. Here's a fresh bed, but I reckon you never go anywheres to stay all night."

The third time she frowned over the fan-shaped cards: "You'll get your wish."

To prove it she showed the happy girl that the nine of diamonds, the ten of hearts and the ace of diamonds were between the queen of hearts and the house, and she replaced the cards carefully in the sugar bowl.

"I can do nothin' more'n tell you as the cards run; but you'll get your wish and two men'll talk to you about matrimony an' a ring before long. Good-night."

"Good-night," said Milcah.

Her shyness vanished under the promise of the fortune.

She found Struven sitting over the fire with her father. The room was blue with smoke and rank with the odor of old Tirzell's favorite tobacco.

"I haven't seen you this long time," said Struven.

"Las' Sunday," she answered; "four days."

"Four days is a long time—sometimes."

"Sometimes," she agreed.

The men laughed, and Struven clasped his hand over his left side for fear of the pain exertion brought to his heart. When his breath came more readily he felt in his pocket and offered something in his colorless hand:

"I've brought you a pretty."

"What is it?"

"Guess."

She turned her head away and looked from the corner of her eye.

Struven opened his hand and showed a tarnished ring with a purple set.

"It's yours; come get it."

"Never mind," she said.

"There's a breastpin over to my house, an' a earring. You can have 'em."

"Never mind," she repeated.

Struven evidently bore her a very good heart; he had offered her a ring.

Judy had foretold this of the young, fair man.

When Struven urged her again to take the ring, she said no. He put it back in his pocket and went out in the rain.

"It's a good thing to have money," reflected Tirzell wistfully when the door had closed. "He's got a gran' place over on the main, two cows, an' a horse an' a mule, all them things. He 'gratulates himself on 'em constant. They'd as good as belong to the girl he married; she'd have the credit of 'em anyhow. He says he's a mind to treat his wife's father right, whoever he may be. Young Marr's got nothin'; Struven's got all that was his."

"He didn't get it right."

"He's got it."

Milcah closed the conversation by blowing out the light.

The next morning she was out at the squirrels' cage before Croy was stirring and before the stars in the east had begun to fade.

She was anxious and unhappy, afraid of Struven and his ring. When day dawned and the men went down to the sturgeon boats, Marr was not among them. He was not there in the afternoon, and she made an excuse for going to the store, where she learned he had gone to Belford.

Tirzell left the house early in the evening, and dark found Milcah still in front of the squirrels' cage. She had not stood there long before Marr stepped noiselessly behind her and covered her eyes with his broad palms.

"Who is it?"

"What made you stay so long?" cried Milcah.

"I went to get you something."

He held her head down on his shoulder with one hand while he searched his pockets with the other.

"Can you see out here?"

"Yes—no."

She went into the cottage and made a light—though her hands shook and three matches went out or broke.

They bent their heads over a box which he unwrapped with awkward fingers. There was a sparkle and a glitter, a meeting of two hands eager to give and take, and Judy's fortune had come true.

Marr put his house on the bay shore in order, and one Sunday morning when Father Bohannon made his yearly visit to St. Mary's down the beach, he and Milcah set out before dawn to be married.

It was late when they came back, for St. Mary's was a long way off, and the black ox traveled slowly. Their secret was an open one. Marr's boat lay at the landing with its mast twined with green, there were garlands fastened in the oarlocks and heaped in bow and stern. All Croy waited on the shore; Struven was there and old Tirzell, who was sympathetically apologetic and declared a preference alternately for his son-in-law and for the Jerseyman.

Milcah stood up in the boat in her white fluttering dress; she was still awed by the mystery of the lights, the incense, and the unknown words. Marr set the sail and a fair wind sent them out on the shining water with their canvas colored like a rose.

Struven was not inclined to submit to his defeat quietly. He instituted a series of annoyances of his neighbors that wanted opportunity only to become persecution. He questioned the boundary line and threatened to bring suit and ask the courts to decide how much of the remnant of Marr's land belonged to him.

The waves were making an island of Marr's Point, which increased in size as the sand washed down from Struven's shore. What the waves took from one they gave to the other. This was not rare further up the coast, where people told of farms that had been washed away and of islands that were constantly changing shape.

Struven had lost a third of a mile and Marr was satisfied to believe it was a judgment for his desecration of holy ground, and for his meanness for buying land at a tax sale. In time he hoped by this method to become repossessed of all that had belonged to his father, but he had a superstitious fear of the law, and he dreaded an appeal to the courts.

Struven had other means of adding to his income than by farming and trading. He was a good shot and game was plentiful; out of season ducks brought better prices, there was not so much competition, and after delivery the middlemen took all the risk. He was safe as far as the beachmen were concerned, who held that any man had a right to shoot a duck at sight, but a tract of land between the ocean and the bay belonged to a club whose wardens and keepers were not in sympathy with local feeling.

Not long after the season closed Struven had a good bag to

deliver, and the signal from the middleman was to be a light from the west shore.

It was about this time that Milcah conceived the idea of setting a lamp in her window for Marr as he came up from the fishing, and Struven, who had never seen a light from that point, took it for the signal and sailed close before he discovered his mistake.

He tacked and beat back and forth; he became aware that he had not the water to himself; there was another sail that hung on him and followed silently through the darkness.

Beyond Marr's, a second light kindled, burned steadily until midnight and disappeared.

Struven's cupidity obstinately refused to lose the ducks; he determined to get away with them by outrunning the other, when the big, black sail bore down, and the light from the keeper's lantern flashed on him.

"We've got you this time, Struven!" shouted the warden.

The impact of the boats brought the keen pain to his heart and he sat pressing his side, while the men made sure of the game.

As he went down the bay, he looked back at the light in Milcah's window, which was still burning, and laid another charge to Marr's account.

Marr forgave Struven his rivalry, because he had been unsuccessful; he was willing to overlook the desecrated graves, because he believed the man was being justly dealt with, but this last charge waked up and united all his old resentments.

The part of informer was dishonor in the last degree, for the beachmen were as one against the club and its keepers, opposed to the game laws, and willing to shield each other as a matter of mutual protection. He denied and threatened, and Struven, whose punishment was likely to be heavy, wrought himself into a frantic belief in his accusation.

When he could no longer keep away, he rowed across the creek that separated their holdings. The hour was early, and the west had not yet come out of the blue mist that hid it.

Marr's boat was on the edge of the water with his gun in it, and a little way off, Marr was busy untangling a heap of ragged nets.

Struven called out before he had shipped his oars.

The hatred and jealousy of the last six months found

expression in a mutual rage that could never satisfy itself. Their words cut through the air in vehement evidence of how far each was driving toward an abandonment of self-control. They were drawing nearer with a savage determination that was not unlike the grim approach of two animals, when Struven stopped and caught the rifle which he had brandished in his right hand, to his shoulder.

Out of the stillness burst a sharp report, and the Jerseyman fell face down on the sand.

Marr, stunned and uncertain, and still hot with anger, turned to see Milcah standing motionless with her hands across her eyes, and his gun smoking at her feet.

He seemed to have spent a hundred years in crossing to her.

"Are you hurt?" she asked.

"No."

The hardship to each was to acknowledge the danger for the other's sake.

"Is he moving?"

"He hasn't moved."

"Look."

"He won't. I thought you were afraid of the gun."

"When he started to fire, I forgot I was afraid."

"Listen!" He spoke under his breath: "If I stay here, what'll happen?"

"I did it."

"For me; an' that's the same as if 'twas me. Do you understand?"

"No."

His exaggerated fear of a court of justice took hold of him.

"Do you think I'd let you stand up there and say this: *I did it?* Do you hear?"

"It was me." She clasped her hands around his arm and drew herself close to him: "I'm afraid."

"There's only one thing to do: I'm goin'."

"Where?"

"I don't know."

"Don't go." She began to tremble.

"There ain't anything else. If I didn't go, they'd find out the truth; we'd tell it ourselves. I couldn't stand to see you—" He motioned toward Struven: "Leave him alone till to'rds evenin' an' then go after somebody."

All the things he wished to say suddenly became useless. What was the good of saying useless things?

He got in his boat, rowed across the creek and disappeared in the pines.

At sundown he found himself thirty miles away, in sight of a little town that doubled itself on the edge of the bay. A line of red oyster houses was losing color in the shadow, and at the end of a long pier lay a craft that dwarfed the schooners and bugeyes around her. She was long and deep and her bows shot out of the water with a rakish air that gave her a suggestion of piracy; forward a big mast with a lookout atop cut into the sky. She belonged to a Northern man who had bought her in the bay and was taking her outside for the menhaden fishing higher up the coast, when his crew mutinied.

The mob on the pier was the discharged men, and the captain was endeavoring to replace them from the onlookers.

"That's the Samuel Lile," said an oysterman, "Cap'n Jere Stricker. A man must be hard up for work to go after the mossbunkers. The cap'n's been arguin' for an hour, an' he can't get his last man."

A shout went up at another unsuccessful attempt.

"Will he take anybody?" asked Marr.

"An' glad to get 'em."

Marr went down the pier and offered himself. The crew jeered as he climbed over the side, and an hour later the Samuel Lile left the harbor.

Beyond the capes he was given a post in the lookout, where he watched for the yellowish tint that told the advance of a school. Sometimes he went out in the boats to help draw the seine, but he liked the lookout better; it seemed to take him out of Milcah's world, and he had a feeling that the further he kept from her the safer she would be. He began to think of her and of himself as of two people whom he had known a very long time ago. As the vessel went up and down the coast, to him the low, blue line was more distant than the unseen shores below the horizon.

All through the summer they followed the fish, returning to the factories with their fetid catch, and back again to the wide fields, each time further south than before. It was December before the last trip was made, and the Lile went up to the city for sale.

The bay was too near for Marr; there were Croy folk who

were oystermen and who sailed over its hundred-and-fifty miles; besides, the fear of apprehension woke up instinctively in the crowded community, but because he clung to the water he stayed on the Lile as watchman.

One morning he heard his own name spoken:

"Marr—Aver Marr? No; I never heard of him. You'd better ask on board."

Marr let himself down hastily and went out in the street. The sky was covered with a low, gray cloud, and soft, undefined shadows lurked about all things. Between masts and black bows on one hand, and a row of gay or dingy shop windows on the other, lay a cobblestone pavement, over which went a crush of horses, carts, and drays. Men shouted, bells clanged, and whistles shrieked; along the sidewalk passed a stream of people laden with baskets and bundles, to and from the boats.

Further down, an unfrequented street sloped steepily from the water; the grass in it was faintly green, a booth was packed with young pine and cedar trees, and a tall brick building blocked the far end.

Men in groups had gathered in front of a low house with a flag and a sign above the door, "United States Recruiting Station," and a soldier in uniform stood at one side.

Marr stopped and watched them from across the street. A sea lawyer on a coil of old rope had been watching them all the morning.

"They want to be soldier boys," said the sea lawyer, "all dressed up fine at government expense an' shipped off to the Philippines."

"Where's that?" asked Marr.

"Other side of the world. There's more on hand than we can manage, an' we want some able bodied fellows to help us out. You'd make something of a soldier yourself. Ever take to soldiering?"

"No."

"Got to be so tall an' weigh so much, with sense enough to handle a gun an' stan' up an' be shot at. That's all."

Marr hung about the place until late in the afternoon. The other side of the world must be safe, it sounded so far away. When, at last, he presented himself at the door, the guard's indifferent face opposed him.

"Time's up," said the guard.

It was [illegible] when he went back to the vessel. The clouds had [illegible] and the sky was splendid in red and blue.

Although the noise in the street had grown to a steady roar the wharf by the side of the Lile was a quiet spot, and deserted, except for two women who had sat all day at the foot of the ladder, one with her tired old head bowed on her arms, and the other who had watched with steadfast patience.

At the sound of Marr's footsteps she got up and came slowly towards him.

"I couldn't wait till evenin'." She told her story as if they had parted yesterday, for the words were always on her lips: "It didn't seem right to let him stay there like that, so I fetched somebody and I told what I'd done, but there wasn't a mark on him; they said it was his heart that killed him."

Instinctively, she had begun her long journey to the town on the edge of the water, from thence to the menhaden factories over the State line, further up the coast.

It had been like chasing the ghost of a sail. Once she had reached a shore in time to see the sharp bow and the mast with the lookout sailing away in the distance, and to learn that the Lile was making her last trip, so she had gone back to Croy and bribed Judy Kilgour with all she possessed but her ring, to go with her, and the wise woman had cheered the soul of the seeker with the invariable prophecy:

"There's a fair man—a fair, young man a-waitin' for you. Seems like he comes a journey. Here you are; your wish is on your back. You bear a good heart to'ards each other, an' you come to'ards each other with a salute."

Marr looked down the harbor to the smoky horizon.

"Tyke Marit's here; he's goin' down to Burfield; he starts to-night," said Milcah's soft, tired voice.

An influence touched him from the sky that burned above the black masts, and the happiness of his life came back.

He saw his house against its shelter of pines, and all things, from the flood of the bay to the sand around the door, glowing with a subdued brilliancy under those wing-like shapes; he heard the roar of the surf from the ocean, and he felt the rest and peace of the place and of the life he loved.

The feeling for Milcah, which he had kept down for the eternity of the last eight months, rose up and overwhelmed him. He loosed her hands from their hard clasp in her shawl.

"Let's go, Milcah," he begged; "let's go now."

# Anecdotes.

IN this department a first prize of $5.00 in gold, and second and third prizes of an annual subscription to Short Stories each, will be given for the best, the second and the third best original or selected anecdotes sent in before the 1st day of the month following the date of this issue. No other compensation is made for matter used in this department. **The sources from which all selected or reprinted anecdotes have been taken must be clearly stated. The Editor cannot return contributions or correspond about them. If the story is valuable keep a copy of it.** Address "Anecdotes," care The Current Literature Publishing Co., 34 West 26th Street, New York

## Music Hath Charms.

He was a business man. As he stood on the platform of a surface car homeward bound he whistled softly. The world had evidently used him well that day. At Chambers street a newsboy, taking advantage of the crowd, made his way into the car. All passengers seemed supplied with papers, however, and, disappointed, the boy wriggled past the conductor and was about to jump, when the voice of the business man stopped him. "Can you sing?" he asked kindly, holding the boy in position in front of him. The conductor scowled. The gentleman placed a nickel in his hand. "The boy's fare," he said; and then to the boy: "Give us 'Jerusalem the Golden,' and throw your voice up the aisle. I'll join in."

"Jerusalem! Je-ru-sa-lem ——"

came the beautiful soprano voice of the boy, supplemented by a clear and manly tenor.

The effect was electrical. Ladies stopped chatting and craned their necks. A bibulous gentleman, seated in front, caught the words and added his crescendo to the refrain. It was irresistible, soul-stirring; and as the car bowled along the ears of pedestrians were greeted with such a volume of song as never before greeted them at that hour of the day.

"Now, go in and sell your papers," said the business man when the last note had died away. The conductor looked the other way.

"Gee!" said the boy, returning with his cap full of nickels and dimes. "Gee!"—EDWARD EVERETT HORTON.

## Didn't Use Pajamas.

A prominent bishop of the Episcopal Church tells the following story:

He was at a dinner given to several of the clergy by a society woman. Opposite to the bishop sat another clergyman, a shy, retiring, old gentleman, whom a perverse fate had seated next to a young society girl; she, accustomed to the light chit-chat of her set, was rather at a loss for a subject of common interest.

A silence had fallen—one of those sudden lulls which will come in the midst of the most entertaining dinners, and are the despair of the hostess. The young girl cast about frantically for a subject with which to start the conversational ball rolling again. A dish of fruit before her gave her her cue, and, into the silence, in a voice made rather high by nervousness, she flung the question:

"Doctor C——, do you like bananas?"

A puzzled look, mingled with some dismay, crossed the old gentleman's face.

"Pardon me, my dear young lady, but I am a little hard of hearing. What did you say?"

Overcome with embarrassment, the girl repeated her question in a louder voice, in a fascinated silence which none seemed able to break.

"Do you like bananas?"

But again the clergyman begged her leniency, and besought her to repeat the words; so a third time the thoroughly confused girl went over the inane remark, this time fairly shouting it in her desperation.

"Do you like bananas?"

The gentle, diffident, old man, in embarrassment equal to hers, at last answered:

"I thought I must have misunderstood you, my dear, but since you ask me, I must confess that I am very conservative, and I still cling to the old-fashioned night-shirt."—M. L. MYERS.

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## Aunt Mahaly's Mohnin'.

In the darkened "settin'-room" of her little cabin, sat Aunt Mahaly all alone. With her gingham apron thrown over her head and the tears running down her withered cheeks, she rocked back and forth, softly moaning all the while. Uncle Ephraim had died but recently, and his widow's grief was deep and heartfelt.

Thus for more than a week she sat, refusing to be comforted.

Then one day a gentle breeze found its way in between the close-shut window blinds. It fanned Aunt Mahaly's tear-stained cheek, and told such a sweet story of bright sunshine and glad summer-time out of doors, that finally she arose and, for the first time in many days, the cabin door stood open.

Pretty soon an odor was wafted in upon the breeze—the odor of strong-scented musk; and, Aunt Mahaly peeping out from among the gourd vines that covered the porch, beheld a gorgeous creature advancing down the path.

It was Jim Johnson's widow, a young woman comely and yellow; one of "them half-way niggers," as Aunt Mahaly had always called them in deep scorn.

The Widow Johnson was bedecked in a bright yellow gown gaudily flowered with bunches of lavender peonies. This "Dolly Varden" costume was incongruously surmounted by her widow's bonnet with its sweeping black crape veil. Jim had been dead about four months. This was her idea of "secon' mohnin." The very sight of her aroused all Aunt Mahaly's ire.

She watched her until she disappeared from view. Then, fom its rusty nail, she took down her old black sun-bonnet and started to the village store.

Walking up to the clerk, she asked him for three bottles of jet black ink. The clerk looked at her in mute surprise. He wondered why Aunt Mahaly had lately grown so literary.

Homeward bound, the Widow Johnson once more approached Aunt Mahaly's cabin. She saw the old woman out under the apple-tree bending over a bowl into which she was dipping some dripping clothes. Beside the bowl were three empty ink bottles.

Impelled by curiosity, the Widow Johnson drew near to see what she was doing. She soon discovered that Aunt Mahaly was dyeing her underclothes in the diluted ink.

"Why, Aunt Mahaly!" she exclaimed. "Doan you know that it'll pizen you to wear them ink-dyed gyarments so close to your——?"

But here she was interrupted by the old woman who turned and faced her; and, if looks could scorch, the Widow Johnson would that instant have been burned into a cinder.

With her eyes still fastened upon the gorgeous widow and the affected evidence of her sham grief, Aunt Mahaly answered in a voice that quivered with indignation and resentment:

"Chile," said she, "I ain' lak some folks. When I mohns, I mohns, *I mohns frum de skin out!*"

—MIRIAM COCKE.

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(In accordance with our offer, the first prize of $5 in gold, and second and third prizes of subscriptions to SHORT STORIES for one year, have been awarded respectively to Edward E. Horton, 3934 Frisby street, Baltimore, Md.; M. L. Myers, Claymont, Del.; and Miss Miriam Cocke, Knoxville, Tenn., for the foregoing three best anecdotes submitted before January 1st).

## Knew Him.

Pat had been solicited by the parish priest for money to say masses for the soul of his brother who had died the week before. After much persuasion and sorely against his inclination, he consented, and with many sighs and groans produced the necessary sum. A short time after the same priest came to him again for a further contribution on the same matter, and to accomplish his object quickly, he began:

"Pat, I had a drame last night and I saw your brother in purgatory; sure he'd suffered greatly, but, thanks to the money you gave me before, he'd got his head and one shoulder through the door; now two pounds more'll get him out entoirely."

"Father," says Pat, "if Mike's got his head an' shoulder through, all the divils below'll never hold him."—ELEANOR MARCHANT.

## Lost.

A man returned home late one night after having partaken rather freely of the "cup that cheers." All might have been well had not one tree intercepted between him and his destination—one solitary tree at the foot of his own steps; but Mr. B—— suddenly came into such forcible contact with that tree that he was almost stunned. After recovering his senses he wandered about, but repeatedly bumped into the same inoffensive barrier. At length he sank down on the ground and muttered helplessly:

"Lost! Lost! in an impenetrable forest!"—LINDEL HOSKINS.

## But He Didn't Dance.

It was a Liberty (Mo.) man who attended a society ball at Excelsior Springs in company of his wife, with the intention of having a grand time. He started in all right, but while dancing a quadrille he noticed that his clothes were ripping, and he hurriedly retired to a dressing-room with his wife, who procured a needle and thread and began sewing up the rip.

While the man was standing there minus his raiment, he heard the rustling of skirts, and it occurred to him that he had taken refuge in the ladies' dressing-room. He appealed to his wife, and she shoved him to a door which opened, as she thought, into a closet. Opening the door quickly, she shoved him through and locked it.

A second afterward she heard him yell:

"Mary! My God, I am in the ball-room!" And he was.—Selected by Arthur Bentley, from the St. Louis Star.

## Got the Desired Position.

My friend Jones called upon the superintendent of the elevated railroad a few days ago and informed that official he desired a position as guard on one of the cars.

"Have you ever had any experience railroading?" asked the superintendent.

Jones replied in the negative, whereupon that official asked what had formerly been his employment.

"I am a professional sardine packer," answered Jones, and, needless to say, he was immediately engaged.—Dr. M. A. JOSLIN.

## Eloquence at Bay.

It was a preacher who had that "fatal fluency" for whom an acquaintance laid a trap. He had a way of promising to preach, and on beginning would say something like "I have been too busy to prepare a sermon, but if someone will kindly give me a text, I'll preach from it." One determined to cure him. He therefore asked him to preach. The invitation was accepted. The time came and the visitor began his usual introduction:

"Brethren, I have been so pushed for time to-day as to have been quite unable to prepare a sermon. But if some of you

will give me a text, I'll preach from it. Perhaps my brother here," turning to the plotter near him, "will suggest a text."

"Yes, brother," came the ready response; "your text is the last part of the ninth verse of the first chapter of Ezra, and its words are 'nine-and-twenty knives.'"

There was a pause, an ominous pause, as the preacher found his text. He read it out, "Nine-and-twenty knives," and began at once.

"Notice the number of these knives—just exactly nine-and-twenty; not thirty, not eight-and-twenty. There were no more and no less than nine-and-twenty knives."

A pause—a long pause. Then, slowly and emphatically, "*Nine*-and-twenty knives."

A longer pause. Then, meditatively, "Nine-*and*-twenty knives."

Again he rested. "Nine-and-*twenty* knives." A dead stop.

"Nine-and-twenty *knives*—and if there were nine hundred and twenty knives I could not say another word."—Selected by Eleanor Marchant, from Harper's Monthly.

## A Good School, That!

A man who stammered badly accosted a man on the street of a certain city and said:

"C-c-c-can y-y-you t-t-t-tell m-m-me w-w-w-where t-t-t-the s-s-s school i-is t-t-t- that c-c-c-c-cures p-p-p- people w-w-w-who st-st-stutter?"

The other man stammering much worse than the first replied,

"T-t-t-the s-s-s-s-school i-i-i-is j-j-j-just a-a-a-at t-t-t-the e-e-e-e-end o-o-of t-t-t-this s-s-s-street. A-a-a-a-any w-w-w-w-way, th-th-th-that's w-w-w-w-where th-th-th-th-they c-c-c-c-cured m-me."—Annie K. Chatfield.

## Indeed!

A young Irishman, lately landed, and not having any employment, was asked by a friend to go out and secure rooms for his friend's mother, with whom he was staying, and who was too lame to go househunting herself. Returning about 6 p.m., looking very weary, he was asked what success he had had.

"Sure, Mike," he said, "I found hundreds of places for rest your aunt (restaurant), but divil a place to rest your mother."—Eleanor Marchant.

## Knew His Destination.

Some time ago I was unfortunate enough to be one of few passengers on a train known among railroaders as the "Night Owl," which, needless to say, is scheduled to make a stop at every whitewashed fence the road officials deem necessary to class as a station.

After making a halt at one of these so-called stations, which, by the way, is unusually large, a man entered the car in an intoxicated condition, and dropping down in the nearest seat was soon sound asleep.

Presently the conductor came into the car and after arousing the man, said:

"Tickets, please."

"I (hic) ain't got any ticket," was the reply.

"Well, where are you going?" asked the conductor.

(Hic) "To hell," he answered after a moment's hesitation.

"All right. Give me twenty-four cents and get off at Whitehall," said the conductor; and, strange to say, the change was forwarded.—Dr. M. A. Joslin.

## Captured Big Game.

In one of the St. Louis Sunday schools the classrooms are separated by glass partitions. A St. Louis paper says that during a session of the school one of the teachers was much annoyed by loud talking in an adjoining room.

At last, unable to bear it any longer, he mounted a chair and looked over the

partition. Seeing that one boy who was a little taller than the others was talking a great deal, he leaned over, hoisted him over the partition and banged him into a chair in his room, saying, "Now be quiet!"

A quarter of an hour later a small head appeared round the door and a meek, scared, little voice said:

"Please, sir, you've got our teacher." —Selected by Annie K. Chatfield, from The Youth's Companion.

## A Perplexing Question.

Pat and Mike, having but lately arrived from Erin's green isle, were walking along a railroad. Upon seeing an approaching train they both started to run. Pat took to the woods, while Mike ran on the track until the train picked him up and threw him off. Pat came up while Mike was lying by the track and said:

"Why didn't you run through the woods?"

"Faith and be jabbers, if I couldn't outrun it on the track, how would you expect me to running through the wood?"—Selected by Earl Bentley, from the Illustrated Companion.

## He Wanted to Know.

When Hamilton Wright started on his Alaskan trip it was arranged that his wife should telegraph every other day concerning affairs at home. On the alternate days he would reassure her as to his health. As he journeyed farther and farther into the northwest the daily messages became very costly and Mrs. Wright conscientiously used up every one of the ten words for which she must pay.

At the beginning of the fourth week when telegrams were worth ten dollars apiece she sat at her desk writing the message which one of the children was to take to the station.

"Children all well. Aunt Lucy here," Mrs. Wright had written. Four more words were allowed her by the telegraph company—what thought should they convey to the absent one? Her eyes fell upon the broad gravel driveway that curved up to the house. This driveway was Mr. Wright's pride, and even as he left for the station that last morning he cautioned his wife, "Be sure you keep the driveway in good condition; have the gravel scratched frequently." Mrs. Wright dipped her pen in the ink and added four words. The message read, "Children all well. Aunt Lucy here. Gravel has been scratched."

The following day came the reply:

"Who scratched it?"—MARY ALDEN HOPKINS.

## The Parrot Knew.

A parrot left alone in the house in his cage by the open window heard a man in the street crying wood, and the parrot at once called "Throw it right in the cellar window." The man thinking the master of the house addressed him obeyed and was just throwing the last stick in when the head of the house appeared and demanded an explanation. When the man with the wood explained that he was told to throw the wood in the cellar the owner of the parrot was much enraged, and catching up the bird twisted its neck and threw it out on the ash-pile for dead. After a time the parrot began to come to, shook its head and looking around spied a dead cat on the other side of the ash-pile and said

"Aha! you've been ordering wood too, have you!"—A. K. CHATFIELD.

## Hard on the Copyist.

Bill Hammel was known in and about Los Angeles County as a clever deputy sheriff, good fellow, and expert penman. One day he was accosted by a member of his fraternity, an old Castilian gentleman, who requested that Bill make a copy of a very important communication that he wished to send to

an official of high rank in San Francisco.

Rather complimented than annoyed at this interruption on a particularly busy day, Hammel set to work. He soon brought his finest pen into action. With many flourishes, and a number of corrections in the composition (the Spanish gentleman being quite lax in his knowledge of English verbs), he finally finished the lengthy treatise.

Much pleased at the result, the deputy triumphantly handed the copy to the old critique, who scanned it closely, then arose, holding up the copy at arm's length, and said in his most pompous manner:

"Brother Hammel, this is the finest letter that the Honorable Ramouldo Pacheo *has* or *will* ever receive."

Hammel immediately mumbled "something" about it being "nothing," but was entirely unheeded by the oblivious enthusiast, who continued blandly:

"*Not* for the writing, but for the grammar. I am the finest *grammaterian* in Los Angeles City." With a hurried "thanks" he moved majestically out of the office, leaving Bill a dejected but modest man.—GIROFLE SMYTH.

## A Return Ticket.

A merchant whose business called him from New York to San Francisco bought a return ticket, and having been to San Francisco was returning again, when he wished to stop over at one of the stations along the way back. The conductor told him his ticket was not a stop-over check, but a through return ticket. But the merchant would expostulate he had a return ticket. So the next two or three stations were treated in a like manner, and the train coming to a large city, he again repeated his request. The conductor then became angry and commenced to swear, likewise the merchant, declaring he had a return ticket. A minister, who


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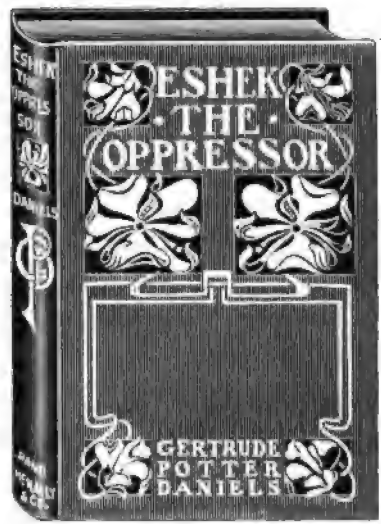


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sat directly behind him, got up and touched him on the shoulder, saying:

"My dear man, do you know if you swear like that you will end in hell?"

The merchant turned around and yelled:

"I don't care! I got a return ticket."
—WILL MURPHY.

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### Called the Station.

There are but few people in Charlotte, N. C., who do not know Butler Springs, the night bell-boy at the Central Hotel. He is one of the rare characters of the town and not to know him is to be behind the times. Butler is an old, before-the-war darkey. He is large, muscular, and active, kind-hearted, amiable, obedient, faithful, and respectful. No better or more agreeable servant ever lived. He is always willing, ready, and thoughtful. But with all of his fine qualities Butler has faults and weaknesses. He is illiterate, superstitious and dull of recollection.

A score or more years ago Butler had a railroading experience that is worth recording. Some conductor on the Southern Railway knowing the old negro's capacity for work, engaged his services as porter on a passenger train between Charlotte and Washington. Butler was happy, for he had always longed to be a railroad man. He bought a fine suit of the regulation cut and started out with flying colors. All of his old friends at the hotel hailed him with delight and made him feel that he was in the right place. But before many days had passed Butler was in deep water. He could not learn the names of the stations and remember them. One day, the conductor, having become annoyed with his persistent appeal for help, refused to give him the name of a station and dismissed him abruptly, declaring at the time: "I will not tell you, and if you fail to call out that station I shall fire you."

Butler was in the closest place of his life. His cherished job was at stake,

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and he had but a moment for reflection, for the whistle had blown and the train was nearing the station. But Butler was equal to the emergency. He scratched his head for a second and rushed back to the front door of the first-class car, threw the door open and cried, at the top of his coarse voice: "Bow! Wow! Wow!" Some drowsy passenger who sat near the door jumped to his feet and asked: "What in the name of the Lord was that you said, nigger? What station is this?"

With a great grin on his old black face Butler looked at the traveling man and said: "Bossman, you heered what I saide an' you better git off, too."

After that the conductor never failed to tell Butler the station.—H. E. C. BRYANT.

### "Tell Ye Later."

Bridget, sitting in the window of the second story of a building, was one day suddenly surprised by seeing Mike, who had fallen from the top of the building, shoot past her window.

"Oh, say, Moike, are ye hurt?" she screamed.

"Tell ye later," replied Mike shortly. —LINDEL HOSKINS.

### Unappreciated Testimony.

"Brethren and sisters," began a shifty-eyed man, rising in the midst of the Salvation Army meeting, "I want to testify to-night to the blessed work that religion has done for me."

"Say on, brother!" cried the captain encouragingly; "say on."

"I am a cable-car gripman," continued the first speaker, "and, as most of you understand, my business is one in which patience and temper are often tried almost beyond endurance; and, as you also know, it is customary for men in my position to return an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth at the slightest provocation. But since I have received the sustaining consolation of the faith I have striven to be a meeker and better man."


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"Only yesterday," proceeded the speaker modestly, "I had an experience which tried me to the utmost, but gave me a glorious victory in the end. We were jolting along a crowded street, three minutes behind schedule time, when a well-dressed young man signaled me to stop. Between his lips was an unlighted cigar and in his fingers a match. When I had brought things to a standstill he carefully scratched a match on the side of the car and slowly lighted his cigar. When the weed was drawing freely he stepped back, thanked me with a polite nod, and waved me to go ahead. Had this occurred only a few weeks ago, before I began attending these meetings, I should have assailed that young man with an outburst of profanity that would have made his hair curl, but yesterday——"

"You resisted the temptation?" interrupted several eager voices.

"Yes, brethren and sisters; I pulled the lever and went onward without a word, counting one hundred to myself, and——"

"Stop right there, young man!" broke in the Salvation Army captain sternly. "You seem to have forgotten that we were men and women of the world before becoming soldiers of the cross, and that some of us were liars ourselves. There is a great deal of difference between a Christian and a confounded fool, my friend. Sit down!"—Selected by Elsie Leiter, from Puck.

## Equal to the Occasion.

After the war, the furniture at a certain notable Viriginia country-seat, which had grown shabbier and shabbier for want of renewal and repair, had reached a climax in the matter of dilapidation, when a distinguished stranger, stopping briefly in the neighborhood, came one morning to the house on a ceremonious call.

The mistress of the establishment,

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thrown into a flutter of excitement by the magnitude of the occurrence, was still further confused by the fact that her husband usually such an efficient host sat aloof in a remote corner of the room.

"Mr. Jones," she exclaimed reproachfully, as soon as the visitor was out of hearing, "you didn't help me at all! Why didn't you sit near the General and talk to him?"

"My dear," replied Jones, rising and pointing meekly to the seat he had just vacated, "I was patching a hole in the sofa." —Selected by Eleanor Marchant, from Harper's Monthly.

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## Reasonable Excuse.

Many of the pictures of Whistler, the artist, are vague both in treatment and subject. The public may be pardoned for not understanding some of these pictures after hearing an amusing anecdote of the painter.

One night Whistler dropped into Sir Henry Irving's rooms to dinner. Other guests were present, but Whistler alone was silent. Two of his landscapes adorned the walls, and apparently he wanted no further entertainment. Every few minutes he would jump up from the table to get a better view of his own work.

At length, after a prolonged examination of these studies in moonlight and moorland, he cried out, "Irving, Irving, look what you've done!"

"What's the matter?" inquired Irving, calmly walking up to the pictures.

"Matter?" thundered Whistler. "Why, the matter is that these pictures have been hung upside down, and you have never noticed it. I suppose they have been like this for months."

"I suppose they have," replied Irving. "But I think I might be excused since it has taken you, the man who painted them, over an hour to discover that they are upside down." —Selected by Hortense Blackburn, from the Hartford Sunday Telegram.

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# SHE Names the Day:

## A Débutante's Story, by Constance Tippett. Illustrations by Florence England Nosworthy*

MISS CARTER was at home the butler said as he opened the door. As I passed on my way to the library I caught a glimpse of myself in the mirror. Why will people always hang their looking-glasses in the most unbecoming light? I wondered if she would think me changed, if she would notice how much grayer my hair had become during my year and a half of absence, and if the deepening of the

*Written for Short Stories.

lines around my mouth would be as apparent to her as they were to me at the particular moment. I had never noticed before how pronounced they were.

By the time that I had finished these reflections my journey across the hall was over, and with the comforting assurance that gray hair is distingué and that deep lines add that priceless embellishment—character—to a man's face, I entered and stood before her.

To my distinct disappointment, she was not alone. There were two of them, and they bore the trade-mark, "Made in Society," which makes further comment superfluous. I was so put out at their being there when I wanted to be alone with her that I didn't properly appreciate at the time what a cordial welcome she gave me, or how plainly she showed that she was unfeignedly glad to see me.

Being informed that I was a lately returned traveler, the Manufactured Articles did the Manufactured Polite, but as I refused to be Baedeker unabridged, they soon gave it up and left me free to sit back and appraise her.

That she, too, had changed was apparent; that she had grown older was plain—very plain, and she showed her age—even the beautiful black velvet dress she wore, and the large pearls in her ears, did not conceal it. And the buoyancy of her manner emphasized it still further. "And," I thought, "if I have aged, so has she." But again—"she has improved—vastly—have I?" It was really very puzzling, and I was very glad that at that moment she sent the Articles to the other end of the room to hunt for a book.

She said, "Wasn't I clever to send them away?"

I said, "They oughtn't to have been here in the first place. Didn't you get my note?"

She spoke again. "Of course I did."

"Then you knew that I wanted to see you alone"

"You said so."

"Then why—?"

"Don't be cross. I couldn't help it. Papa is in his den." This last with such a radiant smile that I wanted to kiss her on the spot But the Articles had found the book, so I went to Mr. Carter instead.

It was some time before I returned, but though the original two had gone, there was a whole roomful of others—at least

so it seemed to me—and to her, too, if she afterward spoke the truth—though in reality there were only four.

I must have shown my impatience, for when she dropped the sugar tongs and our heads met, she said, "Don't mind. They're going soon, and I've given Howell orders about admitting anyone else."

At last we were alone, though before the retreating footsteps had died away she said:

"Tell me quickly. I can't wait another moment."

"You kept me waiting," said I.

"I know you won't be so mean. You saw papa?"

I hesitated. She came nearer I gave in.

"Yes. And your mother, too."

"Well?"

"They both say you are the one to decide".

"Decide? I did that long ago."

The next few sentences aren't particularly important to any one but ourselves.

Finally I said, "Have you decided on the date, or do you want time to think it over?"

"Time? You dear, old goose. I had it all settled in my own mind ten minutes after I received your letter from the steamer."

"Well, when is it to be?"

"I thought that the fourteenth—"

"Not next month?"

"No. Nor the month after, but the month after that."

"January. Isn't that rather long to wait?"

"My dear man, I must have some clothes, and I want to be all through with dressmakers and all their kind before I start on what will be a new life for me."

We discussed the new life. I mentioned December.

"I gave you good reasons," she said. "Dressmakers rush for no man at this season And, besides, Julia won't be back till the twelfth, and I've set my heart on having her here for what will be the happiest moment of my life.

I said, "You really think it will be?"

"I know it," she answered.

Then I remembered what was in my pocket.

"I've got something for you."

"Really," she said, trying to look surprised

"Yes. And this is it," I said, and I took her hand and placed it on the fourth finger.

"What a darling!" she said, looking at it. The next minute her arms were around my neck.

Just then a man appeared in the doorway. He was a young man—very young, very good looking and, for the moment, very much embarrassed. Strange to say, Miss Carter was, also. I was the only one with any presence of mind.

"Come right in, Harry, and don't mind me."

"Oh, it's you!" he said, looking very much relieved.

"Looks like the same," said I.

"Hope I didn't interrupt."

"Not at all. We were just settling things," I said. "Margaret and I—"

"Why such formality?" she laughed.

"Meg, then," said I.

"That's better. Go on."

"Well, then, Meg and I were just deciding a momentous question."

"Can't you guess?" said Miss Carter.

"I might," he said.

"It will be the fourteenth of January. I invite you now, but don't tell any one on peril of your life, for I want to tell my secrets myself." This from Miss Carter.

"*Your* secret?" I said. "I like that. Where do I come in? I thought it was my affair."

"Oh!" she said. "Well, you just wait till you see the papers the next day. You'll wonder if you were there at all for all the attention they'll pay *you* when they see my dress."

"Did you design that in the ten minutes, too?"

"No. Long before."

"White?"

"Of course. What did you suppose, black?"

"I hoped not."

"You're polite, when I'm wearing black this very minute."

"I am aware," I said.

"Don't you like my frock?"

"Too old for you."

"I suppose you consider me a baby still."

"No, I wish I could," for at the moment I felt positively ancient.

For she had grown older. I had felt it even more keenly after he had come into the room, and, as I said before, she showed it. For she had reached that period of life which is the only time the modern woman shows her age. She was a débutante.

"Look what he brought me," she said, showing him the ring on her right hand. Then she turned to me.

"Now, I'll give you another hug and kiss for being the very dearest uncle that ever brought his niece a lovely ring from abroad, and offered to give her a coming-out dance. There—and now you don't mind going back to papa for a little while—do you? for there is something very important I want to say to Harry."

# MR. Enos Adams and the Gods at Wei Hien: The Story of a Chinese Uprising by Florence Edith Austin. Illustrations by Edward Mayer*

MR. ENOS ADAMS, commercial traveler for the Acme Mining Supply Company—his territory the Celestial Empire—arrived before the Presbyterian compound at Wei Hien just after the missionaries, intent on keeping their Christian souls in their Christian bodies, had scudded through the thickening darkness across the fields toward Yang-Kio-Kau, a half hundred miles away, where a Yankee gunboat, vigorously bracing apart that "open door," had come to their rescue.

Since the last crook in the rail-fence road (the crooks made for the especial purpose of switching off evil spirits) Mr. Adams had observed a luminous haze gathering on the evening sky, and his two-mule tandem cart trundled in at the broken gate to the compound just in time to see the chapel and dispensary flash up in flames and to find himself surrounded by a mob of rampant Boxers, incensed to frenzy over the escape of the absconding missionaries.

*Written for Short Stories.

Immediately there arose the mightiest outburst of Chinese billingsgate that a foreigner ever heard and survived. Mongolian maledictions flew through the air like bullets from a mitrailleuse as the yellow devils closed in on him. The native driver was dragged from his perch on the shafts (where the whiffletrees cross) and left by the wayside in a panic, gabbling all the prayers ever taught him by his venerated grandmother, while Mr. Enos Adams and the cart were hustled into the radius of light from the burning buildings. For the moment the bulky sample cases became the booty of a shrieking, scrambling, fighting, grabbing, smoke-shrouded, flame-illumined, flourishing mill of saffron fists and legs. Sections of

mining implement models were seized upon, regardless of their correlative parts, but, in the semi-light and the mêlée, a small packing-case of assorted dynamite cartridges was left unnoticed on the ground near the temporarily neglected prisoner.

Mr. Adams had been warned of expected trouble, and here it was all about him. Whether it was a revolution or an insurrection, in the language of nations, Mr. Adams only knew that there had been a spontaneous combustion among the natives of Wei Hien, and, from the interjections of this howling rabble, he gathered that a simultaneous eruption was jostling up the entire Celestial Kingdom, and that, with a fiendish oneness of accord, the divinely governed had quit burning joss sticks for the extinction of the foreign devils, and had taken it upon themselves to execute their prayers, and, incidentally, the foreigners.

Mr. Enos Adams had always congratulated himself upon the iron constituency of his nerve, but to say that in those first

few jumbled moments he was decidedly "rattled" but inadequately expresses his condition. Whole breezes crinkled his spinal column, and a rain of sweat washed his face, while his legs out-trembled Bob Acres. As he beheld that encircling, bobbing wall of hideous faces in the light of the conflagration, glowing a deep, murder red, he felt that he could leap out of himself with terror only that every motor muscle seemed struck with sudden paralysis. His thoughts flew in all directions. He realized that it would be suicide to draw a revolver on that shrieking wilderness of fanatics, and to beg for his life would be equally futile—his only hope lay in diverting them from their object, which was to slaughter him.

He seized time to look about him calculatingly, and strove to put his panting agonies out of sight. And when his wildly darting eye lit upon the cartridge case, his nerves grew steadier, his blood leaped forward again through his veins, and a diabolical daring came on him.

"'I'm born but not buried yet,' as Granny used to say," he ruminated, almost jubilantly. And by the time the ringleaders of that ruffian conglomeration could withdraw their attention from the division of the spoils, Mr. Enos Adams was again in superb command of himself, and was ready with his first tactic when the crowd again crystallized about him.

The Ta-Chuan, or Boxers, inspired by some moon-eyed son of evil, had descended upon the mission, intent on shedding **yang queedza* blood. The *yang queedza* of the mission had

**Foreign devils.*

escaped them, but here was a foreign devil evidently delivered into their hands by the spirits of their angered ancestors. But how to execute him in a manner sufficiently satisfying was a question for much vociferous debate, until the Mongols unanimously agreed that he be dismembered piecemeal, and the fragments thrown into the liquid sea of flame that swept in billows from building to building over the compound.

"Dismember me!" ejaculated their subject for vivisection with surprising elation. "By Buddha! I can take a hand in that game myself!"

While a courier was dispatched for a proper carving implement the mob, reserving their energies for the festivities to come, and now comparatively quiet, fell to complacently discussing the appearance of their victim. The foreign devil was not so very prepossessing to look upon. He had been through a railroad wreck, a premature explosion in a mine, and an earthquake, that had each taken a souvenir to remember, or be remembered by. He had indeed, as the Chinese say, "lost face."

To be sure these mayhems were a drawback to him as an Adonis, but so long as they had not extracted that part of his brain where his knowledge of the Chinese tongue was located, his decimations were not detrimental to his carrying his samples and his lingual accomplishment into the heart of the Celestial Kingdom, where others of the "superior race" had gone to develop the neglected resources of this unprogressive land.

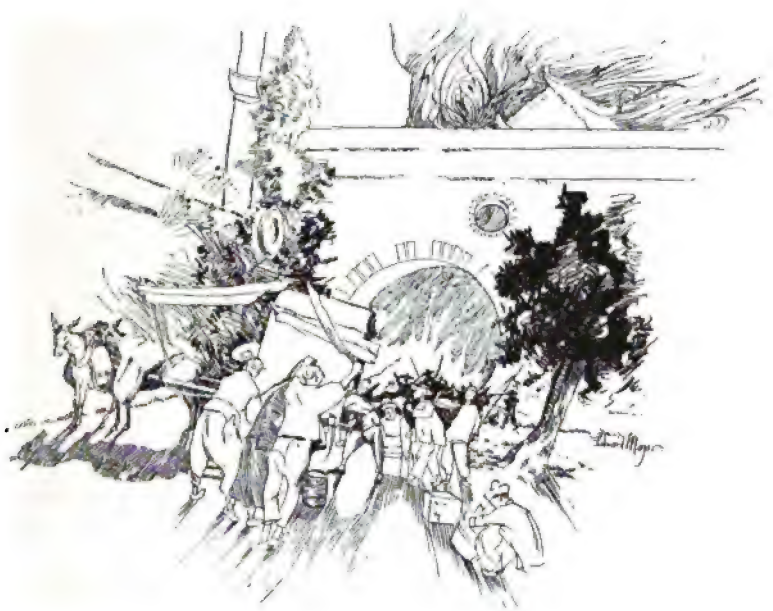
Now Mr. Enos Adams lifted up his heart and blessed that broken railway tie, that impatient powder blast, that hysterical upheaval of earth and fall of walls—he had not survived all these experiences, he felt convinced, to be thus ignominiously snuffed out by some washee washee Chinamen—and each souvenir of these devastating adventures should be made to play a part in his deliverance from the "yellow peril" threatening him.

"As the Only Book says, first war, then signs and wonders—or something like," soliloquized Mr. Adams, as he proceeded to avail himself of the temporary lull.

With the sweat of terror still on his brow, but with a preternatural deliberateness of movement, he lighted an incense stick, commonly known among barbarians as a stogie cigar, and waved it to the four points of the compass in true celestial

style, before igniting an eleven page letter of violet written prayers (prayers of the usual sort from a deserted wife).

The mob was instantly awed into silence. The last Chinese anathema rang out to quaver into a startled gasp. Aghast, they watched him burning purple prayers—imperial purple, the insignia of royalty, and not burned outside the "Purple Forbidden City."



Having incinerated the last royal prayer to Jizo, the god and guardian of travelers, Mr. Enos Adams, *pro tempore* polytheist, lifted up his voice above the beating of his heart and called on Buddha and all the polyonymous Chinese deity to bend ear to his supplications.

His voice, high and strident from an early experience as a street vender of patent medicines, and also endowed with the irresistible persuasive quality of a once successful book peddler, rolled out clearly to the furthermost fringes of the rabble.

Snatching off his hat and a patch of red hair, revealing a neat job of parietal trepanning, denoting the path of an earthquake-impelled brick, he prayed with the force of a calliope:

"O Omito Fo (Amitabha Buddha), look down upon thy silver-crowned son."

Both Fo and the mob gazed in amaze at the metal cranium,

over which the red rage cast scintillating lights and darting gleams, as though it were jewel set.

"O Spirits of my Ancestors, whose trinity of souls watch over and defend me, hasten Tung-wo, the god of miracles, to my deliverance from these *yen renn* (wild men)."

The *yen renn*, still in the throttling clutch of mediæval superstitions, watched with thrills of fear, and yet incredulously, for the wonders Tung-wo would send at the supplication of a foreign devil.

"Kuan-ti, thou green-faced god of war," he next implored, "send the sword and the leaden hail against all whom the wind from this, my hand, shall smite." And the hand that had worn a glove since the railway episode, became suddenly detached at the wrist, and was flung with horrifying directness at the local executioner, who, with his official two-edged blade, was tearing himself through the thick-set hedge of heathen who had packed into the compound. The executioner fell on his face in the dust as miracle number one gyrated swiftly toward him, while the rabble swayed like stricken grain back before the blasting imprecation and the curse-carrying, demon-severed hand, and Enos edged forward till his foot was touching the cartridge case.

Now, feeling himself equal to an army of Orientals, he vociferated defiantly:

"O Souls of the Five Rulers, send the 'tall white devil' and the 'short black devil,' with their all-blighting breath, to spit pestilence and famine upon these *turtles over whom

*The heaviest curse a Chinaman can pronounce is to call one a turtle.

my teeth shall sweep." And dropping out a section of incisors from his mouth, he hurled them in a boomerang zigzag over the heads of the bewildered, terror-struck horde, who fell back as far as the press in the rear would permit—those along the circuit of the masticators succumbing into squirming heaps of quivering humanity, and the "pale son of Satan" utilizing the momentary distraction to dexterously unhasp the box of dynamite cartridges.

"Everything seems going as if on oil," exulted Mr. Enos Adams before vocalizing his next dire curse.

"I kotow to thee, Tien Wong, thou four rulers over the quarters of the earth, thou eyes of the universe! Strike blind all those upon whom the blighting gleams of this orb shall fall. Let neither them nor their parents nor their children nor their relatives seven times removed ever see the light of another sun." And touching one of his evil blue eyes, it fell out into his hand and flew circling far over the now surging, plunging, crushing, trampling, thoroughly frightened mob, each endeavoring to dodge out of the course of that winged devil thing; while Mr. Enos Adams, with each of the kotows to the Tien Wong, spread open the cartridge case, and, with the third, most profound prostration, he extracted a thimbleful of dynamite from its packing and, with a lightning motion flung it toward the nearest burning building, the while shrieking, above the growing confusion, to the God of Thunder to lift up his mighty voice and make the earth to tremble with his anger. The answer came even as he called, and a fiery shower followed the detonation of the irate god, and fell in scorching darts over the lunging, stewing mass of frenzied celestials, making desperately toward the narrow exit in the compound wall, at the same time watching, with backward glances, the foreign devil who was turning their own gods against them.

The moment had come for a *coup de grace*, so, tearing off his tall linen collar and flinging it after the stampeding herd, and making as though he would unscrew his head, he shouted:

"Feng-shi, thou god of all gods, thou god of luck, send instant death upon all over whom my blood shall spurt. Make it well up into a fountain that shall drench all Wei Hien."

But there was not a celestial left to receive his spurting blood; so, foregoing the process of decapitating himself, he proceeded quietly to gather up the scattered fragments of his anatomy.

"It isn't every man who can make a remnant sale of himself when the emergency arises, or has recourse to a whole

pantheon of malevolent chop-chop deity," ruminated Mr. Enos Adams, with not in the least the deportment of a man who had passed through a great crisis. And lifting his hat ni grateful acknowledgment to the unseen spirits of the air, he departed by the light of the demons of fire across the fields for the German mines, nine long English miles away.

# A WINTER'S NIGHT:

## A Polish Tale by Eliza Orzeszko. Adapted from a French Version by Katherine Berry di Zerega*

ALTHOUGH not far advanced, the night was very dark. Heavy clouds obscured the sky, unrelieved by a single star; fiercely howled the wind, groaning and plunging into a deep ravine, whose precipitous heights enclosed a frozen stream. Ravine and river, with outlines shrouded in snow, were lost in the surrounding gloom. A mountain on the right, covered with leafless trees, shut out the horizon; on the left were dark spots, village homes; their lighted windows pierced the darkness with luminous points.

At the foot of the ravine walked a man. His somber silhouette moved rapidly over the vague whiteness of the land. The lofty banks of the ravine diminished his size, reducing him to a being of infinitesimal proportions, borne away on an ocean of clouds and solitude. The unchained winds seemed dragging him along at their will. A wild and terrible nature confronted the wretched man, who appeared but as a grain of sand, a blade of grass, an atom fallen from the precipice. He advanced, however, with a firm step, but his iron staff now striking against a stone, he paused, with eyes fixed on the lighted windows of the cabins, and a smothered exclamation escaped him—he had recognized the place. Then he crossed the frozen river, climbed the opposite bank, and approached the last enclosure of the village.

It was the dwelling of Simon Mikoula, who was seen within, standing against the thick wall of the structure By the light of a poor lantern his figure appeared colossal, his head massive

*Adapted for Short Stories.

through the clouds of smoke that he exhaled. His large, muscular hands evinced uncommon strength, while his entire frame indicated an energetic and indomitable will. At first glance one could see that if this old man were to arise and give orders, every one would hasten to obey.

A number of people were present. The oldest, a carpenter, was at work upon a wooden rake. One could distinguish naught in his bearded face save two little eyes, as shining as sparks. His wife, the dignified and beautiful Christine, was standing beside the hearth, with the majestic mien of a revered matron, a wife content with her destiny. Near her was a young girl seated at a spinning-wheel, its motion at this moment suspended as she listened to the animated words of a peasant.

Seated upon an over-turned tub, and employed in shelling beans, was a little old woman who, in order to hear better, had thrust forth her wrinkled face into the bright light of the fireplace. No less astonished and eager was the wife of Alexis, pretty and fresh as the dawn, and slender as the stem of a lily. She was rocking an infant in her arms, while watching a wicker cradle attached to a beam of the ceiling, wherein an older babe lay sleeping. Two little blond girls, on the top of the oven, and a youth of fifteen, occupied in weaving a net, were likewise listening eagerly to the story of Alexis, the youngest son of old Mikoula. Standing in the middle of the *izba*, still wrapped in his cloak of black sheepskin, a whip in his hand, the young man was talking excitedly.

"It is true, I tell you. Everyone is talking about it, and they all agree that it is the brigand Bonk, the man who killed three people ten years ago. Sentenced to hard labor for life, he escaped, and, under an assumed name, and with a forged passport, managed to get into a factory, where he worked for two or three years. Discovered, he received one hundred strokes of the knout."

The young mother, who was rocking her child, uttered a plaintive cry; the old woman shook her head; the blue eyes of the blond boy were clouded with terror.

"And he lived through it? Great heavens!" exclaimed the gentle mistress of the house.

"Yes, indeed! The devil didn't fly away with him for that!" answered Alexis. "After some time spent in the hospital, he was sent off to Siberia. Well! now would you believe it! He escaped again!"

"Did he escape from Siberia?" asked Mikoula.

"Yes, indeed, father! After a year or two he left without leave. They have sought for him throughout the empire, and—they have found him—here."

"What! here?" exclaimed Mikoula. "Who do you expect to believe such stuff?"

"I assure you, father, I am not lying. He was discovered two leagues from here, in a factory, with a forged passport. But he escaped again, before they had time to arrest him."

"Did they send around his photograph?" asked the carpenter.

"People like that don't get photographed—but the officer in charge received a lot of papers, and said: 'Good people, search for him, for God's sake, if you would avoid misfortune, and when you have taken him, bring him to prison. This time he will receive not one, but two hundred strokes of the knout; then chains on his ankles and hard labor for the rest of his life.' That is all."

A profound silence ensued. One would have said that the ghost of the miserable man, with bleeding back, had just crossed the *izba*. At length Mikoula arose, and, while knocking the ashes from his pipe against the table, said in a firm tone:

"It is no more than just! All criminals should be treated thus. 'Thou shalt not steal.' A murderer ought not to live! God himself hath said so. The innocent should be protected. Enough said!"

Here his stern glance fell upon the family group, and his brow, deeply ploughed with wrinkles, his whole being, seemed to proclaim that if one of his flock should ever follow the example of the *other one*, he would be the first to lay upon him his massive hand of bronze. Everyone was silent whenever he uttered these words: "Enough said!" disputes, disagreements, discussions, at once ceased.

Alexis laid down his whip, went up to his wife, and began to softly caress the cheek of his sleeping son; the carpenter once more took up his plane, and the monotonous whir of young Annette's wheel again filled the room.

At this moment the door creaked on its hinges, and the sound of a rough, panting voice was heard exclaiming:

"Praise the Lord!"

"Now and forever!" replied those within.

"Sir, madame," continued the harsh voice, "I am a traveler who asks for your hospitality. Permit me to rest here awhile. I will not impose upon you long, but will leave in less than an hour."

"Enter and rest yourself," replied Mikoula.

The flame of the hearth revealed a man of remarkable height, with broad but sunken shoulders, clad in a suit of fine cloth, and wearing heavy boots that covered the knees. His face was of the sickly hue of parchment, and his high brow, red hair, and bright blue eyes challenged instant attention.

"Pray sit down," said Christine, without quitting the hearth. Then, turning to her son, the youth of fifteen, she added:

"John, fetch a stool."

The stranger seated himself, with the iron staff between his knees.

"I am so cold—hungry," said he, rubbing his hands together, and with a smile half jocose, half insinuating.

"The wind is strong enough to knock one down," said Alexis.

"Would you like something to eat?" said the carpenter.

"Yes, indeed; I should have eaten, but neglected to bring any food with me," he replied, smiling; his voice, however, betrayed an inward anguish, and his glance darted eagerly to the oven. "I have been marching for two days. What do I say? Two days! Two weeks—I have walked and walked and walked; I seek what I have not lost—and know not if I shall ever find it."

He laughed again, a forced laugh. No one spoke, for no one gave orders save Simon Mikoula. The old man regarded the stranger abstractedly, then addressing his eldest daughter-in-law, said: "Have you anything to eat, Christine?"

"There's some gruel," she replied.

Exhaling a thick cloud of smoke, Mikoula then inquired:

"Do you come from a distance?"

"From Prussia," was the reply.

"To work in a factory? Germans seldom come here except for that purpose," observed Mikoula.

"Are you a German?" eagerly questioned the urchin John.

"No, but I come from Germany. I heard that they were building some barracks in this neighborhood, and thought perhaps they might employ me, for I can do good work. I care not what it may be, provided I make a few pence."

Christine now placed a bowl of soup and a huge piece of black bread before the traveler, who seized the bread with his long, bony fingers, reddened with cold, but his eyes sought something else.

"Pardon me, master, but I am chilled through. Might I have a little glass of brandy?"

"I've no objection," replied Mikoula, absently; "Christine, get the brandy."

The carpenter's eyes fairly glittered. Christine produced a bottle and glass, which Mikoula half filled, lifted to his lips, then, bowing to his visitor, said gravely:

"To your health."

On receiving the glass from the old man, the hand of the stranger trembled; he replied:

"To your prosperity."

The carpenter regarded his father timidly and stretched out his hand for the bottle, then, as Mikoula was silent, emboldened, he poured himself out a brimming glass, and, after drinking it, turned to his brother Alexis and said:

"Come, take a drink."

"I don't drink," replied the young peasant; "my wife has forbidden me." Then, with a loud laugh, "She made me swear not to, on the crucifix; didn't you, Olenka? It's now more than a year since I've tasted a drop of brandy.

The old woman, who was shelling beans, drew near the bottle.

"Drink," said Mikoula.

She did not wait to be urged, but, bowing to the company, quickly gulped down the contents of the glass. The stranger fastened his gaze upon her, while greedily swallowing enormous mouthfuls of soup and devouring the bread crumbs in the hollow of his hand. However, as his hunger began to be appeased, he examined those around him more curiously. One would have said he was searching for someone; then he abruptly demanded:

"And your wife, master, is she still living?"

Before Mikoula could speak the old woman replied:

"She's dead, poor woman. She died ten years ago; the same year that I was dismissed from the castle; then Simon, God bless him! took me in to help Christine."

"Dead!" repeated the stranger, his gaze riveted on the face of the speaker. "And you, mother," he continued, " isn't

your name Nastoula? Were you not once housekeeper at the castle?"

"Why, yes," she replied, in surprise.

"How did you know it?" questioned Alexis.

The stranger did not appear to hear.

"How long ago did you build this house, good master?"

Simon calmly replied that he had only added a story to the old one.

"I see that the *izba* is not exactly what it was," observed the stranger.

"Did you ever see it before?" asked the carpenter.

There was no reply. Suddenly the unknown resumed:

"So then the old mother is no longer here! Nor John!"

"Who do you mean by 'John'?" asked Simon, taking his pipe out of his mouth.

"Why do you ask?" replied the stranger, with a loud laugh. "Why, your eldest son, of course."

"As you know so much, have you ever been here before?" asked Olenka.

"You must have been," asserted Mikoula.

"You're right; I was here a long time ago. I helped build the castle."

"That has been built for nearly twenty years," said the old woman.

"More than that," corrected the stranger.

"Come now," said Mikoula, after carefully regarding his visitor, "it seems to me that I've seen you somewhere."

"Please God!" chimed in the old woman, "it seems to me that I, too, have seen you before. Did you ever happen to speak to me?"

The vagabond smiled and, regarding her wrinkled hands, replied:

"Did I ever speak to you? Many a time, to be sure! Why, you used to give me white bread and honey, taken out of the castle storeroom."

Hereupon he burst out laughing, his eyes glittering like jewels.

The vacillating gaze of Nastoula, searching and inquisitive, and that of Mikoula, calm and severe beneath his heavy eyebrows, strove to discern whom this stranger might be.

The unknown rubbed his hands together to conceal his agi-

tation, then, going up to the young girl at the spinning-wheel, inquired:

"Art thou the master's youngest daughter?"

"Yes," she replied, blushing.

"And not yet twenty?"

"No."

During this colloquy the room was filled with the clamor of tongues. John was accusing the little old woman of having taken another glass of brandy, and Olenka was laughing at their quarrel; the carpenter was talking to his wife, who had seated herself at the spinning-wheel. Mikoula alone was silent, continuing to examine the traveler through the puffs of smoke from his pipe, with his elbows on the table, and his head thrown back, when Alexis, in a loud tone, suddenly inquired:

"Have you seen or heard anything of Bonk?"

A solemn silence ensued, then the stranger calmly replied:

"Of course; one hears of no one else nowadays."

"Deliver us from such talk! Do you think they will catch him?"

"Perhaps yes; perhaps no," replied the vagabond, coldly.

"It is to be hoped that they will; otherwise we shall have any number of robberies, fires, and murders."

"Nonsense! If he has escaped twice, he'll be clever enough not to hang around here," cried the carpenter. "I can't for the life of me understand," he went on, "how he ever got out of that prison, ten years ago—for I've seen it. Tremendously thick walls! Soldiers! Bayonets! You'd think only a bird could escape. Well! *he* managed to, all the same! He couldn't have bitten through the walls, or jumped out of the window, for it's so high he'd have been smashed to bits on the pavement."

"He didn't jump out; he flew out," replied the vagabond, with a smile of satisfaction.

"With wings manufactured by the devil?" grumbled the carpenter.

"On a witch's broom?" said Alexis, jocularly.

"No, but with the aid of an umbrella, in faith!"

Everyone ceased speaking, overcome by surprise, while the stranger stood swaying complacently in front of the fire.

"Yes, a fool would think it a miracle, but a wise man, and I

am one, would know that such an idea was mere childishness. Now this is what Bonk did: He took an umbrella, a very large one, opened it, turned it upside down, and houp! jumped inside of it and flew down out of the window. Otherwise he would have fallen head foremost. The umbrella, sustained by the wind, descended slowly, and Bonk only scraped his nose on the pavement, where he landed full length. They found the umbrella all right, the next day, but it was three years before they found the prisoner. Ha! ha!"

His laughter and his countenance expressed the pleasure of a rogue after successfully performing a mischievous trick.

"How is it that you happen to know all these details?" interrogated Mikoula, in a loud, severe tone.

"Yes; how is it?" they all repeated.

The unknown seemed to detect hostility in this question, and, proudly raising his head, replied:

"How do I know? Do people never talk? And haven't I ears to hear? They've talked and I've listened. What the devil do you mean?"

He stamped his foot to emphasize his displeasure, but seemed alarmed.

Alexis stared hard at him, then observed:

"You appear to know a good deal about this Bonk, my dear sir; perhaps you have met him."

"How can that be when I've just come from Prussia, and it's more than twenty years since I've set foot in this country," replied the vagabond, shrugging his shoulders.

"What a pity! Then you might have told us something that would have helped us catch him. Ah! if I could only once get hold of him, before the police, wouldn't I flay him alive, though!"

"For shame! So young and yet so cruel!"

"But he's a brigand!" replied the infuriated Alexis.

"May the rogue perish!" cried the carpenter. "He must be secured at all risks, or he'll find accomplices and begin again.

"He won't have time to," replied Alexis. "When once he's been taken, when they've given him two hundred lashes of the knout, they'll send him off there to the other end of the world to work in the mines, underground, from dawn till night."

"Poor soul!" murmured Olenka, hugging her son to her breast.

"Why was he ever born?" muttered Nastoula.

Christine drew up her tall figure, gazed thoughtfully into the fire, and in a low tone let fall these words:

"And yet, he, too, has been borne in a mother's arms."

The unknown suddenly leaned over to her, and hurriedly murmured in her ear:

"Watch over your son! Guard well your John, so that he may never be like that miserable man."

Startled, she turned her head, but he was gazing in another direction at Mikoula, who, still relentless, was proclaiming in stern tones:

"It is but just."

"Still," resumed the stranger, "it would be interesting to hear his side of the story; for it is not likely that this Bonk became a brigand without some reason. Whence did he come? Where is the mother who bore him in her arms? He was not an assassin! So he must have taken the downward path step by step, before reaching a point from which no power can pluck him back. I know not what he may have done before committing murder, but I do know that he abhorred his crime afterward and that he tried to work honestly in a factory. Do you fancy that they left him in peace? No, indeed! They arrested him and pushed him down into the mud again. Who cared to know that he repented? The devil, perhaps! but—"

Here Alexis interrupted him excitedly:

"Ah! how well you take the part of brigands!"

"Oh, yes! you who are so comfortable in your fine sheepskin coat, do you think that a poor devil with a scarred back has no claim to pity?"

"None!" cried Mikoula, roughly, with a frown. The word shot forth like a blow in the face of the unknown, who, recognizing the affront, strode across the room and sat down beside the old man.

The attention of the company was now diverted by the arrival of two newcomers; confidential conversation ensued, and Mikoula and the vagabond were left to themselves.

"Master, what has become of your son John?" questioned the stranger, in a low tone. "Have you, then, forgotten him?"

"Heaven forbid!" yelped the old Nastoula, who had just drunk half a glass of brandy, and had crept up to the two men. "May I be palsied, may I die, if I ever forget my own little

darling, my Jacky. Many and many a time have I carried him in my arms."

But the unknown, heeding not her words, went on: "So then, my master, it seems that you have forgotten John! Nevertheless he was your first-born, a fine lad, fearless and intelligent—"

"Too fearless," muttered the old man, shaking the ashes from his pipe.

"But what happened to him?"

Mikoula was silent for a moment.

"It was all the result of a childish action. I was commissioned to go to the city to consult a lawyer regarding a suit some neighbors had instituted against us. I took John with me, as I was fond of him. God forgive me! He was a very bright boy, but too fond of having his own way. At work he was like a spirited horse; at play, ungovernable. Sometimes he would throw his arms around your neck, and nearly strang e you; at other times he would resist, no matter whom. I used to scold him well, but more often was indulgent; up to that time he had done no harm."

His face clouded and, shaking his head, he continued: "I was wrong in taking him to the lawyer's house. He listened to every word and on our return home, said: 'I will kill any one who tries to take away our property,' but I only laughed at him. The land in question really belonged to us; still, we lost the suit. When the Doubrowas wished to take possession of it, all the village opposed them. But the civil authorities took the matter up, and two employees were sent to measure the field and give to each one his portion. All at once twenty youths fell upon them, armed, some with scythes, some with pitchforks, my Jack at the head of them, like a commander. They were all arrested and tried, but he alone was condemned, and to three years in prison. 'He is the chief,' said they, 'the instigator.' I did not very much mind his being imprisoned for a while, as I thought it might teach him to be reasonable."

The unknown burst out laughing, and exclaimed: "Well! and did he learn anything there?"

"Alas, yes! On his return he gave us no peace. 'What pleasure,' he used to say, 'can you take in staying in these hovels, and in working so hard, while the world revels in riches, and one can get them with so little trouble.' Then I

used to beat him; but he would cry out, 'You'd better stop it father, or I'll run away, and you'll never see me again.' After that he would rush off to the tavern. Then he took to drink: he who had never before even tasted brandy. He was but a boy, hardly seventeen years old, when he was sent to prison, and it was there that he formed the habit. I used to lecture him, and say: 'Art thou not ashamed, John? Dost thou not fear the good God?' And then he would laugh and reply, 'I've seen and heard many strange things in prison. Those who remain in their villages are fools. As to me, I know more about it than you!' Ah! yes, he did indeed know more than I after three years in prison."

Here the vagabond gave a smothered, significant laugh, exclaiming: "Ah! my good master, if you had known what kind of teachers your son had there, the shock might have killed you."

The peculiar intonation of his voice seemed to remind Simon of the past. He examined the traveler curiously.

"What do you mean by that?" said he, slowly. "Have I ever known you before? Who are you?"

The traveler turned anxiously in the direction of the fireplace. Three young girls, neighbors, had just entered, and Christine and Alexis bade them welcome. A party at Mikoula's had begun. But the host sat gazing steadfastly at his guest and appeared sunk in profound meditation. With eyes fixed on the ground, he could be seen, through the smoke of his pipe, shaking his head like one surprised and in doubt.

The old Nastoula, now half-drunk, seizing the traveler by the sleeve, here resumed the conversation:

"So you used to know our John?" cried she. "Did you really know him? Ah! the poor boy, how he suffered!—and through his own father! How he used to beat him! He was as stern with him as he had once been indulgent. Often did his wife and I hold back his arms, crying: 'Simon, don't torment thy child! Don't destroy his soul. If thou goest too far, he'll run away and be lost forever.' Then he would throw us off and bellow like an ox. 'He'll have to suffer, if he won't mend his ways! I'd rather kill him than have him do evil!' As to John, he grew thin and melancholy. One day he seemed submissive, begged his father's pardon, then disappeared. He has never been seen or heard of since; the poor dear! His mother wept, Sister Marie wept, but his father never shed a tear."

With his elbows on his knees, his head in his bony hand, the traveler, with half-closed eyes, was listening to this recital as if in a reverie haunted by evil dreams. Suddenly seizing the brandy bottle by the neck, he swallowed all that was left in a single gulp, then exclaimed:

"Oh! foolish old woman! If he never regretted his first born, why then did he call his grandson John?"

Simon, aroused from his meditation, leaned over to the unknown and, raising his right hand, murmured:

"In the name of the Father and of the Son—"

But the traveler arose and, noisily pushing back his stool, went and seated himself in the shadow.

At this moment the door was rudely burst open and a tall, stout girl, quite out of breath, rushed in, crying:

"For pity's sake! shut the door! Here come the boys to the party. They're going to do all they can to tease us, burn the flax on our distaffs, and a hundred other silly things!"

The girls rushed at once to defend the door. One of them pushed a bench up against it; another armed herself with a firebrand, and a third seized a pail of water. The two little blond girls likewise took part in the mêlée, screaming with all their might, and starting a deafening din. Four stalwart peasants now arrived upon the scene of action, and, notwithstanding a vigorous defense, broke down the ramparts and entered the fortress in triumph.

The newcomers went up and saluted Simon Mikoula, but he made no response, although always pleased to see people in his house; on this evening, however, his gloomy silence and deeply-furrowed brow betokened clouds heavy with tempests. Opposite the old man, between the wall and a hogshead, the traveler was seated in the shadow. He was listening to the charades and songs whereby the guests entertained themselves, and the remembrances they evoked in his soul caused him to heave a mournful sigh, resembling a groan.

The gentle Olenka, who was seated near by, then turned quickly to him, and, with beaming face, exclaimed:

"Nastoula is going to tell us some stories; she knows such splendid ones! Listen!"

The old woman, in her cap of red cotton, in trembling tones, now began her tale:

"Once upon a time there were three brothers. Two of them were clever, but the third was simple-minded. When they

were grown up, and of an age to marry, the father said to them: 'Which one of you shall I arrange to be married the first?' The oldest replied, 'On account of my age, I think you should choose me.' Then the second one said, 'Nor should I object.' Then said the simple-minded one, in his turn, 'I, too, would like to be married.' Then said the father: 'Go to the forest, and he who brings back the most berries shall be married the first.' They obeyed. The two older ones picked away for some time, but their baskets would not fill quickly. Then they turned to the simple-minded one, who was working hard, without saying a word, and asked: 'How many have you?' 'See,' he replied, 'my basket is full, and I am ready to go home.' Overcome by jealousy the brothers seized a knife and plunged it into his heart; then they dug a hole and threw his body therein, covering it with earth. Instead of a cross, they planted a little cherry tree on the grave, then returned to their home.

"Some time after, a horseman passing by, saw the cherry tree and cut it down to make a flute of it. As he was placing it to his lips, the flute began to sing: 'Play not, play not on me. Torment not thou my heart, my brothers murdered me.'

"The horseman, greatly astonished, goes on his way and arrives at the village where the fratricides lived with their father. Surprised by nightfall, he asks their hospitality. 'If you did but know what strange thing has happened to me,' said he to his host. 'While going through the forest, I espied a pretty little cherry tree, slim and straight, and cut it down to make a flute of it. In all my life I have never heard aught like it. Would you like to try it?' The host takes up the flute, which at once begins its plaint: 'Play not on me, my father!' Deeply concerned, the old man passes the instrument to his sons, when again is heard the mournful refrain, 'Play not on me, my brothers. Torment not my poor heart, for you have murdered me.' Then the truth was discovered, and they fell upon the guilty ones and put them in prison."

When the old woman ceased speaking, for several moments silence reigned in the *izba*.

"How frightened these women all are!" murmured the gay Alexis in the ear of one of his companions. "Just wait a minute, and you'll see how I'll scare them, too!"

He went out, and in two minutes came running back, crying: "Help! help! Bonk is coming! The brigand Bonk is after me."

The spinners screamed. The grave Christine herself trembled and glanced anxiously at her two little girls. But the young people, divining the trick, burst out laughing. Then each one had something to say. None had observed that at the time of the joke the unknown had suddenly arisen. Then the laughter of the peasants had appeared to reassure him. His restless glance wandered over the walls and the assemblage, then slowly he sank to the ground, clutching his iron staff, till his form disappeared behind the hogshead. The head alone, emerging from the shadows, and illumined by the flame of the hearth, had a ghostly effect, suspended thus in mid-air. Mikoula encountered its gaze and trembled.

"In the name of the Father and of the Son," murmured he, in affright. His pipe fell from his nerveless hand, but he perceived it not.

"Good God!" faltered he, bowing before this head, so tragic of aspect, so forlorn, emaciated, with withered skin, prominent cheek-bones and shaken by convulsive, silent sobs. The moving lips, though mute, appeared to say: "Father, do you not know your child? Do you not remember what once I was? See what I am to-day!"

"Merciful Jesus! Have pity upon us!" murmured the terrified old man.

At the other end of the room the women were singing in chorus a popular melody, "*Arise, oh, moon! Arise! Ah! fair one, it is time. Approach, my sole delight.*"

And the lips went on. "Dost thou remember our sunny days together? Those days when thou wert wont to turn homeward with nets all full of fish with rosy fins and silver scales; when, barefoot, I did blithely follow thee, while joyously my shouts resounded to the graveyard green, borne by the echoing pines; Father, dost thou remember?"

The swift whir of the spinning-wheels fell upon the ear, accompanying the gay refrain that now arose in swelling tones. "*How can I ask thee, love? They laugh at me and say that I ought not to wed.*"

And still the mournful, quivering lips went on: "Father, no longer may I live with thee, in this, thy kind and hospitable home, where friends and merry games beguile the winter nights. Though chance hath led me here, now must I flee away; flee from the terror that pursues, chilling the blood with-

in my veins. But I have deeply sinned, and as thou saidst but now, 'Justice must be observed!' then here I cannot stay."

Spellbound, Mikoula repeated, tremblingly, "No, here thou canst not stay;" then, suddenly passing his hand over his eyes, he exclaimed: "Specter, get thee hence! What devil hath summoned thee?" He then turned to the wall, leaning thereon his threatening brow, refusing to look or listen more.

And still the women sang a joyful, glad refrain.

Suddenly, as a ribbon severed in twain, the chorus ceased, and from the midst of the group of peasants the insolent voice of Alexis demanded:

"Where is your passport, Mr. Traveler? Show it, so that we may know who you are."

At these words Mikoula turned quickly around. Wrinkled and stern, with hands upon his knees, he remained mute, while regarding the six peasants grouped around the hogshead.

"Does anyone know who you are? We may be guilty in not having taken thee to the guard-house before."

"Perhaps thou art the brigand, Bonk, the man who has shed innocent blood," cried the clever Damien, who had been the first to suspect the identity of the unknown.

As a wild beast pursued by hunters, the stranger threateningly arose. Lifting his iron staff, with a terrible oath, he rushed to the door; but they seized him by the shoulders, while everyone shrieked in chorus:

"Ha! ha! So then your heels are your passport?"

"It is Bonk! It must be!"

The women, in affright, crowded together, and the little girls hid their heads in the skirts of their mother, who alone retained a calm and grave demeanor. The old Nastoula had fallen asleep, from time to time her lips murmuring vaguely the dreamy words of some familiar refrain.

Having reached the door, the unknown fought furiously. Muscu'ar, strong, and doubtless used to this kind of attack, he repulsed his opponents, whose number, however, augmented by Alexis and the carpenter, in the end was bound to prevail.

"Some rope! I say, girls, give us some rope!"

But not a soul stirred, and only the voice of the old woman was heard, humming: "'Play not on me, my brothers! Torment not my poor heart.'"

Then a pleading voice, in humble, trembling tones, arose in the midst of the struggling group.

"Let me go, good people. For the love of heaven! As you yourselves would be saved! I shall do you no harm; I am leaving here at once and forever. Ah! let me go!"

This appeal was met by sneers and laughter.

Suddenly old Mikoula arose in all the majesty of his towering height; then, striving to speak, but failing to utter a syllable, he fell back into his seat. Leaning against the chimney-piece, Nastoula kept on repeating in her dreams, "'Torment not my poor heart, my brothers murdered me.'" As the women did not obey his order, Alexis went out in search of rope, and the vagabond again essayed to escape. With head thrown forward, he exhausted himself in vain efforts. Ah! how shrunken his tall figure now appeared. In this crouching attitude he seemed to already see the knout descending on his defenseless form. His contracted features expressed a whole world of suffering, while his haggard eyes roved o'er the assembled group, wildly imploring pity. At this moment he in truth personified the sum of human misery.

"Chance alone led me here," he continued; "I meant no harm. I only wished to rest awhile. I'm going far away; release me, I entreat you, for the love of Christ. Ah! good people, have mercy on me!"

Christine, as in a dream, was softly murmuring: "And this man, too, was once caressed and carried in a mother's arms."

Alexis now reappeared with the rope.

"Enough of this!" exclaimed a voice accustomed to command, and Mikoula, who had arisen for the second time, now advanced, majestic in his blouse of snowy linen, girt with a scarf of wool. "Release him! Let him go, I say!"

"But, father, it is Bonk," protested the irrepressible Alexis.

"Hold thy peace!" replied his father, sternly; then, with a lightning glance at the unknown, he cried:

"Go, and sin no more."

The culprit crept forward, fell upon his knees, and pressed his lips to the old man's feet. Great tears rolled down Mikoula's wrinkled cheeks; with a sudden gesture he leaned over the unhappy man, prostrated in the dust, then, drawing himself up, repeated:

"Sin no more."

And then, with all his strength, in terror even, he exclaimed:

"Go! go!"

And, folding his arms, added in softer tones: "Go in peace"

# COMTESSE Ernestine: The Story of a German Betrothal.

## By Ivor Lloyd*

THE family plate of the Rosenkrantzes was generally pledged at the "Lombard's" in the High Street of Klatscheburg.

Indeed, it was always there, except when they "received." This occurred once in two months. The evening before the reception, Martin Petersen, the old family factotum, under cover of the gathering darkness slipped up the High Street, a large basket under his well-worn cloak. He returned with the basket tightly packed with as much of the old silver as it would hold, and two more journeys sufficed to bring the greater part of it to the house of its rightful owners. This silver was priceless and had been in the family for hundreds of years. There were some candlesticks said to be the work of Cellini, and some marvelously beautiful dishes, whose designs suggested that they had been wrought for sacred purposes. They had fallen into the hands of the von Rosenkrantzes at the time of the Reformation. The spoons, with their daintily twisted handles, were the work of some craftsman of Southern Germany in mediæval times. They had been presented to the von Rosenkrantz who had been a loyal servant of the unfortunate Queen Louisa by that royal lady herself. And there were other treasures too numerous to mention.

The Gräfin arranged these beautiful things on the tables with her own hands, after they had been carefully cleaned and polished by old Martin. Her tables thus royally set out, she felt for that one evening perfectly happy, and tried to forget that her treasures must return to the Lombard's on the following day. This was necessary, owing to the fallen fortunes of the family. The lady's late husband had, by an extravagant

*From the Cornhill Magazine.

life, reduced their income to a sum which would barely have sufficed to keep a simple burgher household of Klatscheburg together. Her son, an officer in the Blue Hussars, had tastes similar to those of his father, and required constant pecuniary help from his mother to enable him to live the life which he found best suited him.

The Gräfin did not blame him. The family must not forget that they were different from other people. Carefulness and economy are virtues among the Bourgeoisie, but a von Rosenkrantz—especially if he be an officer (and how could he follow any other profession?)—must do his duty in that state of life to which he has been called. It was humiliating to be obliged to pawn the family plate, but it would have been still more humiliating to think that Otto von Rosenkrantz was not keeping up the family character for lavish extravagance among the Blue Hussars. Then he was the only son, and the girls had really cost very little. The two younger were still at the school for young ladies of noble family in Munich, where they received their education free.

The eldest, Ernestine, had left this institution about a year.

Of course, the chief anxiety of the Gräfin was to get Ernestine married, but eligible men with the requisite number of noble ancestors were rather scarce, and young maids are proverbially obstinate and sometimes refuse to accept elderly widowers with bald heads and gouty feet, even though their pedigree may be unexceptionable.

Then there was Lieutenant Braun. But he was not to be thought of. True, he was an officer in the Blue Hussars—a circumstance which had made the Gräfin remark in a despairing way: "I wonder what the country is coming to, when the sons of tradespeople can get commissions in the best regiments!"

For in truth Braun was a nobody—a cipher—a person who could only be admitted on sufferance to the Gräfin's receptions—in short, an individual without a grandfather. The fact that he had lent a by no means inconsiderable sum of money to the young Graf von Rosenkrantz—a sum which the latter had no expectation of ever being able to repay—could not raise him in the opinion of the Gräfin. To lend money to a von Rosenkrantz was an honor in itself. If the money were never repaid, the honor accruing to the lender was, of course, all the greater. Virtue was its own reward.

Nor must we accuse the Gräfin of being unreasonable, when we consider that Braun's father was a common rubber manufacturer of Harburg—a maker of hair-combs, a holder of patents, an employer of labor; in short, a person "we" do not recognize.

It was rather a pity—even the Gräfin admitted that. For Braun was a presentable young man enough, and as smart an officer as any in the Blue Hussars. "But that is only external," said the Gräfin, with a sigh. "Do men gather grapes from thorns? From such a stock nothing good can come. I am not deceived by his gentlemanly appearance and manners. They are an outward veneer to conceal the commonness of what lies beneath."

So Lieutenant Braun, when he came to ask for Ernestine's hand, was flatly refused, and, on his persisting in his suit, was forbidden the house, and the receptions knew him no more.

"It's rather a nuisance," said Otto von Rosenkrantz to one of his chief cronies, as they sat together at a little table in Gerhardt's restaurant; "it's rather a nuisance that the Gräfin won't let Ernestine marry Braun. He's a good fellow and so rich. He would be useful as a connection. But what would you? I cannot go against the Gräfin, and poor Ernestine has no spirit. She would never set herself in opposition to our mother."

And in the meanwhile little Ernestine von Rosenkrantz wept in secret over the maternal decree—but not altogether hopelessly, for, being a young lady of some resource, she revolved schemes for circumventing it.

The ancestral home of the von Rosenkrantzes is quite a feature of the little town of Klatscheburg. Among the quaint gabled houses of the narrow, straggling Friedrich Wilhelm Strasse who would fail to notice the square façade of hewn stone with its windows decorated with florid garlands? Its general effect reminds one of some Italian palace of the later Renaissance.

Ernestine's chamber had the same character of faded grandeur as the other rooms in the house. Its great four-post bed seemed absurdly large for so small a person, and the forlorn hangings of velvet might well have been replaced by something lighter and brighter hued. The old glass, blurred from age, reflected a strange travesty of the childish face which peered into it every morning, and the straight-backed chairs offered little suggestion of comfort. But the room looked out,

not on to the street, but on to the garden which sloped down to the river, which, at that part, was so broad as to resemble a lake. Every morning, if she waked early enough, Ernestine could see the sun rise over the range of low hills across the water, and every morning she looked out for something else as well. For very early in the morning, whenever he was able, Braun would climb the low wall from the river shore, a dark cloak thrown over his shoulders to conceal the bright uniform of the Blue Hussars. Just for one moment he was visible, and then he had hidden himself behind a hedge of clipped yews, where he was presently joined by the girl. No one knew of these secret interviews except Martin, the old servant, and he kept the secret.

This had been going on for perhaps six months, and there seemed to be no chance of any change in the prospects of the lovers.

"We shall never marry at this rate," reflected Ernestine. "We may go on like this till we are old and gray." Ernestine was just nineteen.

It was early spring. The lilacs and magnolia shrubs in the neglected garden were beginning to flower. Every little *bourgeoise* in Klatscheburg was thinking about the new dress she would have at Whitsuntide, and debating whether it would be safe to invest in white muslin and blue ribbons, or whether, Whitsuntide falling early, something less summery in character would be desirable.

Ernestine von Rosenkrantz had no hope of having a new dress at Whitsuntide. The dress she wore had not been paid for. She was reflecting upon this circumstance in the garden, when a sudden idea seemed to occur to her. It brought a blush to her colorless cheeks.

"Dare I?" she asked herself. "Can I carry it through? What will he think of me?"

The morning passed. At dinner the Gräfin said: "I am going to drive to the Castle this afternoon, Erna. We must leave our cards there. I wish I could take you, but that dress——"

"Is much too shabby," finished Erna.

"Yes; you really must have a new dress, my dear."

"Frau Jens has not been paid for your dress for the Court ball, nor for mine, nor for any dresses for the last year," said Ernestine, with as much decision as she dared assume in

speaking to her mother. "She provided the materials for the Court dresses. I have not the face to order another dress from her."

The Grāfin could not deny that there was some sense in what her daughter said.

"Perhaps when the rent of the farm falls due we shall be able to manage something," she said.

"Otto will want all the money," said the girl, "and really it doesn't matter, mother. I can stay at home, though I should have liked to have seen the princesses. They will be sure to ask you in and wonder why I am not with you."

The Grāfin's face grew grave and sad. What chance had her daughter of marrying if she never went out? If only Lieutenant Braun had had a pedigree.

Ernestine watched her mother drive off in a lumbering, old vehicle drawn by one emaciated horse.

Then she slipped upstairs and put on her hat and walking shoes. She came down slowly, her face thoughtful and grave, and let herself out into the street through the heavy front door. Once out of the Friedrich Wilhelm Strasse and in the High Street, she walked swiftly till she came to an old house with a flight of stone steps leading up to the door. On the first floor of this house lived Frau Jens, the dressmaker who made for the best families in and round Klatscheburg. Ernestine sprang up the staircase, and was soon knocking at the door of the dressmaker's little flat. It was opened by a child.

"Tell your mother Comtesse Ernestine von Rosenkrantz would like to speak to her," she said, following the little girl into the trying-on room. Ernestine had taken her place on a red velvet sofa, when little Frau Jens bustled in in rustling silks.

"Good-morning, Comtesse."

"Good-morning, Frau Jens."

"The Frau Grāfin is well?"

"Oh, yes; mamma has perfect health. Won't you sit down a minute, Frau Jens. I have something to talk to you about."

The little dressmaker seated herself on the edge of a red velvet chair.

"I should like to know," said Ernestine, "about how much we owe you?"

Frau Jens's face lit up with hope. Was it possible that the young lady had come to pay the bill? "If you will wait one moment my daughter will make you out the little bill, Comtesse, and I will bring it to you."

"Ah, no!—that is not necessary. You must know approximately."

Frau Jens's face fell again. This did not look like paying. "Let me see, Comtesse. There were the two dresses you had when you came home from the Pensionnat last year. (I was quite sorry to see you in anything but the little dark blue dress of the Pensionnaires, it suited you so well.) Making of one with extras, thirty marks. Material, and making of the summer cambric, fifty marks. How that little dress suited you also, with the pale pink sash and the shoulder ribbons! My daughter was so anxious you should have it for the garden fête at Frau General von Bartels that she sat up nearly all night sewing the tucks, and really I think it was a charming dress—was it not?"

"Yes, it was very pretty," said the young girl a little impatiently; "but go on, please. How much did the making of this cost? No, that can only have been a trifle, for it was cut down from one of mamma's. Tell me about the ball dresses."

"Well," said Frau Jens, "that was rather a large item. You *would* have the silver embroidery, Comtesse, though on so young a lady the flowers would have been quite sufficient decoration for the beautiful white silk. But the silver did look exquisite, I must confess. Frau von der Barlitz, who saw you that evening for the first time, said you were the prettiest young lady there, and the most charmingly dressed."

"The dress cannot have come to less than 200 marks," mused the Comtesse. "Mamma's, perhaps, double that; and then there was another dress for her. We owe a good big bill here, Frau Jens. I daresay you are anxious to be paid?"

"Well, Comtesse, you know I never like to press; but, of course, when one has supplied the materials, it comes sometimes inconvenient to——"

"Of course, I quite understand. I think you ought to be paid."

The Comtesse relapsed into silence for a few minutes, then spoke again. "What's more, you *shall* be paid; and look here, Frau Jens, if you'll do something for me, and it won't be

anything much, I promise you, you'll be paid within six months from now."

The energy with which this was said quite surprised the little dressmaker.

"It's only to supply me with a little information," continued the girl. "First of all, who is coming to try on here to-morrow between three and five?"

"What can she want to know that for?" thought Frau Jens. "Well," she said, producing a notebook. "Let me see. About three or a little after, the princesses promised to be here, and then——"

"What! You make for the princesses?"

"They have ordered their new spring dresses here," said the dressmaker, trying to look as though making frocks for the daughters of a grand duke was an everyday occurrence.

"Do the princesses come alone?"

"Oh, no, Comtesse, never. They are always accompanied by their governess, the Freifräulein von Dietrich-Hulst."

"Oh, of course."

"You know her, no doubt, gracious Fräulein. I hear she is a perfect dragon, and a great stickler for the proprieties."

"She's a horrid old woman, very censorious, and a great gossip," said the girl. "Do the princesses talk to you and make themselves agreeable?"

"Oh, yes; the princesses are charming. They have no pride. The Freifräulein is certainly otherwise, and I daresay they are often lectured by her for being too friendly with everyone."

"Well, and who else is coming?"

"Let me see. Ah, I have promised Fräulein von Bartels at half-past three, but I fear I shall have to keep her waiting, as I don't think the princesses will be ready so soon."

"Fräulein von Bartels! Ah, that is excellent. The princesses with the old Freifräulein von Dietrich-Hulst, and then Fräulein von Bartels—it could not have turned out better. Fräulein von Bartels hates me."

Frau Jens wondered why this circumstance should cause the Comtesse so much pleasure.

"That disposes of the Court people and all the officers and their wives and daughters," said Ernestine, complacently; "for Fräulein von Bartels is the greatest gossip in Klatscheburg. Is anyone else coming?"

"The others cannot possibly interest you," said Frau Jens, more mystified than ever; "for I see it is only Frau Advocat Hansen and little Frau Jürgensen from the Holm, and then, dear me, I had forgotten that I promised Milli Paap; it will be dusk before I have time to attend to her; but there is so much to do this time of year, one does not know how to fit them all in."

"I assure you these others interest me very much, though, of course, I do not know them. I know Advocat Hansen's house—a white villa, is it not?—on the Belle Vue Hill. What sort of a person is she?"

"Ah! a very pleasant lady. They are much respected in the town. She is ordering spring dresses for herself and her daughter. She has been wise to come early to make sure of having them before Whitsuntide."

"Is she a talkative person?"

"Talkative? Why she stays here long after our business is over, telling me all the gossip in the town. If only I were not so busy I should enjoy it, for, going out so little myself, I am terribly dependent on my customers. But it will make me nervous to-morrow, because of my next client, who will be impatient."

"A gossip—ah, very good; and who is the next person?"

"Ah, now I scarcely like to tell you. Frau Jürgensen is the wife of one of the fishers of the Holm. But it was the strangest thing! She was the daughter of one of our most respected burghers—the coal merchant, Georg Steffan. What was the surprise of all her circle when she announced her intention of marrying a Holm fisher? They are quite a class apart—have their own amusements, give large dances, even entirely among themselves, and never associate with the other townspeople. The family was horrified, for though Jurgensen, like many of the fishers, is very well off, it was an unheard-of-marriage for a girl of good burgher standing."

"I suppose so; but I really hardly understand these distinctions."

"I naturally could not refuse to make for her, for I had done so since she was a child, and I am often sorry for the poor woman—cut off as she is from her old friends—particularly since her parents died. She says she always comes to me to hear the news, for down in the Holm the latest gossip of the town never reaches. They are so isolated."

"Ah, then it is rather a good thing she will be there, too—and the other one you mentioned?"

"Emilie Paap. Surely you know her shop. Small, but one of the finest in Klatscheburg. She has such exquisite lace and trimmings—only the finest things."

"Oh, of course. You told me, I think, that my silver trimming came from her."

"We are old friends," continued the dressmaker. "We are very fond of each other, and I order a good deal from her."

"Good," said Ernestine. "So we have the princesses, and Fräulein von Bartels, and then representatives of the professional and tradesman's class, and of the Holm fishers—excellent; it could not have been better. Do you know who lives on the ground floor of this house?"

"Certainly, gracious Fräulein. Herr Lieutenant Braun has the three rooms on the right of the door, and my landlady, Frau Pfeffer, lives on the left. She always says Herr Lieutenant Braun is an excellent tenant. He gives no trouble. Formerly, she used to let it to a gymnasium master, on whom she had to wait herself. But she found that too much trouble. Of course, the Herr Lieutenant has his soldier servant, and has his meals sent in from the hotel."

"And do you think the people who are coming to try on to-morrow know that the Herr Lieutenant lives on the ground floor?"

Frau Jens stared and hesitated. "Well," said Ernestine, "the princesses wouldn't, but Fräulein von Bartels would, I think."

"The Hansens know him," said the dressmaker. "They make a great deal of the officers they know, and invite them as often as they can, so that they are certain to know where Herr Lieutenant Braun lodges."

"Good—and perhaps you would just mention the fact of his living there to the other people, and if you can manage it, give a hint to the princesses that an officer has his rooms there. Never mind why I want this. I shall be extremely obliged to you if you will do it."

Ernestine took leave of Frau Jens, leaving the latter considerably mystified by her strange request.

She slipped homeward, and at the door encountered Otto starting to join some of his friends at Gerhardt's restaurant.

"Where have you been, Erna?" he asked, crossly. "I did not know you went about entirely alone like that."

"Only to the dressmaker's in the High Street."

"It is not correct that you should go unaccompanied," he said, angrily. "I beg you will not do so in the future."

"You have just been dunned for a bill, I think, Otto," she said, with seeming irrelevance. "Look here, can you tell me whether the officers of the Hussars will be on duty to-morrow afternoon?"

"Not till six, when we have to attend at the General's—a horrid nuisance," he said. "What do you want to know for?"

"Oh, nothing. I thought, perhaps, you would take me out—to Belle Vue or somewhere if you had nothing else on hand."

"That is impossible, Erna. You seem to think I have nothing to do but to attend on you. I have an important engagement. I shall be going out directly after dinner, and shall only be back in time to get ready for General von Bartels'."

"Ah, well—it doesn't matter," said Erna, who had obtained the information she wanted.

"And don't go running out alone in this way, I beg you, my dear girl," he said more kindly. "You must never forget what is due to your position."

The following morning Heinrich Braun did not make his appearance in the garden, and for once in her life Erna was not sorry.

At dinner the Gräfin announced her intention of going to spend the afternoon with an ancient lady who lived in the "Stift" near the cathedral. She did not want her daughter with her, and departed on foot at about half-past two, bidding Erna occupy herself with her music and embroidery in her absence. Everything seemed to favor the girl's scheme.

It was with trembling fingers that she put on her hat and tied around her neck a scarf of old lace, to beautify a little the shabby gray dress. Three o'clock found her on the steps of the house in the High Street where she had been the day before. Her heart beat so loudly that she could hear it, when she saw advancing from the opposite direction two young girls accompanied by an elderly lady, and followed by a liveried footman carrying a large parcel.

"Good-day, Comtesse," cried the youngest of the princesses catching sight of Ernestine and running towards her. "We were very angry with you, indeed, for not coming yesterday

with Frau Grāfin von Rosenkrantz. We were so dull and longing to have someone to talk to. When we sent out to entreat the Grāfin to come in, of course, we thought you were there, too. What was our disappointment at seeing she was alone!"

"Yes, Ernestine," said the elder girl, whose playmate the young Comtesse had been in their childhood, "it is ages since you paid us a visit, and we are grateful to anyone who will take pity on us this time of the year up at the Castle. Lent is so very dull."

Meanwhile, Ernestine, shaking hands with each of the three ladies, was making what apologies she could.

"And now, I suppose," said the young Princess Helene, "you are going up to Frau Jens to try on a dress. We were on the same errand."

"As you were here first, we must wait," said the other. "We had better go to the shops to make some of our purchases and come back again while you are there."

"Oh, no, Princess," cried Erna, "I am not going to Frau Jens to-day, and should not have thought of keeping you away if I had been. I am going to see a friend on the ground floor of the house."

The Freifrāulein von Dietrich-Hulst raised her eyebrows. She wondered who lived on the ground floor, and how it was that the Comtesse Ernestine was paying visits alone.

"So much the better," she observed stiffly. "Then, if you please, my young ladies, we will go straight up, as it is not desirable to stand talking in the doorway." She followed her charges up the narrow staircase, bowing stiffly to Ernestine, who stood aside and let them pass. The footman carried the parcel upstairs and returned empty-handed to wait in the entrance. As he took up his position there, Erna was ringing the bell of Lieutenant Braun's little apartment. That evening all the servants up at the Castle, from the housekeeper to the smallest scullery-maid, were discussing the astounding news that Comtesse Ernestine von Rosenkrantz had called on Braun of the Blue Hussars.

The ring was answered by Braun's soldier servant. He did not salute, and plainly showed the surprise he felt. He did not know the Comtesse by sight, but he knew his master's habits, and did not know how he could have given any lady an excuse for invading his privacy.

"But, goodness, I suppose they're all alike, really," reflected he, as he carelessly took Ernestine's visiting card from her hand without looking at it, and answered her question as to whether the Lieutenant were at home in the affirmative.

"Tell the Herr Lieutenant that I wish to see him. Show him my card," she said in as firm a voice as she could. She followed the man in, and the door of the little flat closed behind her with a bang which seemed to seal her fate.

The young Lieutenant was seated by the window, reading. He took the card without rising, but having glanced at it, jumped to his feet. The servant stood aside to let Erna enter, and at a glance from his master left the room to go and discuss these strange matters with a comrade who had dropped in to see him that afternoon.

"Erna!" Braun blushed like a girl, and in his agitation did not take the hand she held out. "You—you have come here alone?"

"Certainly"—she was very pale and appeared to be quite calm. "Did you expect mamma? She has gone to see old Fräulein von Dietz, else, doubtless, she would have been delighted. When you have shaken hands with me, I will sit down and you will order some coffee."

He took her hand and drew her to him. "My darling girl, do you not think——"

"That I am very thirsty and want coffee? Yes, I do. That is a delightful chair by the open window. I will sit there—draw up another chair for yourself."

"Won't—won't you be cold by the open window?" said Braun, aghast. Every passer along the High Street would see the Comtesse there. "Won't you come nearer to the——?"

"The stove is not lighted," laughed Ernestine, "and that is quite right, for it is remarkably warm for the time of year. I will sit here and take off my hat. Otto told me you were not on duty this afternoon. He has gone to Gerhardt's; mamma to visit at the Stift. I had nothing to do, so I came here. Why do you stand there staring? I want coffee and cakes."

"Cakes!" cried the Lieutenant, like a drowning man who catches at a straw. "I have none in the house, for I never eat them. Won't you come round to Schmidt's Conditorei with me and have some coffee there?"

"It would be bad enough our going there together," he thought confusedly, "but not so bad as her staying here."

"On no account," said Ernestine, decidedly, removing her hat, as she seated herself on a rocking chair by the window. "What do you keep a servant for if he cannot fetch cakes from Schmidt's? Please send him at once. I like walnut tart—you can get it in slices, and the cakes they call Moors' heads. But I am really not particular. Schmidt's cakes are all good. But tell him to make haste. I am dying for my coffee."

Heinrich Braun stood in the middle of the room, irresolute. "Shall I not shut the window, Ernestine, first? You will catch cold sitting there."

"On no account. The air is delightful. Do go and order the coffee." Braun had no choice left, and went. Ernestine surveyed the room in his absence. Though the young Lieutenant was rich, his tastes were of the simplest. He had taken the rooms furnished, and the only evidences of his occupation were his books (he appeared to be studious), a portfolio of water-color sketches lying half open on the table, and some photographs of members of his family. He had added no luxury to the simple and tasteless furniture.

When Braun returned his lady-love was calmly surveying the photographs. "My mother and sisters," said the young man. "My mother—perhaps you will think she is not aristocratic looking; but then I think you would like her; she is the kindest person in the world. My little Ernestine, how I long to introduce them all to you. If I had but the right! I think you would be happy with us, though we have no 'von' before our name. That is my brother who is in the business. I often envy him, though he has to work harder than I, but he is among his friends who respect him, in the society to which he belongs, while I have been fool enough to force myself into a set to which I don't belong, and where I am despised because my father makes his money."

"Oh, you must be proud of the uniform you wear, and that you serve the Fatherland," cried the girl. She looked at him with admiration. She thought the tall, fair young man made a far handsomer figure in his light-blue uniform than did her brother, with his dark aquiline face, and short, though well-knit figure. "They can't despise you, really, and when you are married to a von Rosenkrantz, they won't despise you."

He smiled and stroked her black hair: "If only that time would come, child," he said. "But, in the meanwhile, ought I to let you stay here, my Erna?"

"You can't help it. I suppose you don't mean to turn me out by force. Come and sit by the window and talk. I see there is your servant running over to Schmidt's for the cakes. I hope he will make a good choice."

"Erna, have you thought that every person can see us from that window?" he said, hesitatingly.

"Of course. Why should they not? What are we doing that we should be afraid to be seen?"

"Well, you know, it is——"

"Unconventional—my coming here. Ah, that may be; but if I am not ashamed of it, why should you be? You won't make it any worse letting yourself be seen, for everyone knows these are your rooms, or, if they didn't know it before, Frau Jens will tell them. I told her to do so."

Heinrich Braun stared at her in amazement; he took his seat opposite her, looking awkward and embarrassed enough.

Some time passed in desultory conversation. Suddenly Erna stopped. The ordeal was beginning in earnest, for the princesses and their chaperon were passing the window on their way to the shops further down the High Street. The Freifräulein glanced up at the window. She was half prepared for what she was to see there, but the look of horror which passed over her face was not lost upon Ernestine. She hastily drew her charges' attention to something on the other side of the street that their innocent young minds might not be corrupted by the sight of such indecorum, and inwardly resolved to tell the Grand Duke, who would never invite the von Rosenkrantzes to the Castle again.

Ernestine had grown paler than ever. When they had passed she lay back with a positive gasp of relief. "Thank goodness, that's over," she thought. "The princesses did not look—I believe on purpose; it would be just like them; they are so perfectly well bred. Now for Fräulein von Bartels."

But before the second trial there was the welcome interlude of coffee. Hans, the soldier servant, brought it on a tray, and arranged the cups and plates of cakes on the table in the window at Ernestine's request. Braun resigned himself to the inevitable and dispensed the coffee hospitably.

"Now, this is delightful," said Erna. "Did you hear anyone go upstairs a few minutes ago? If so, it was Fräulein von Bartels. She must have come without passing our window; but she will certainly pass it when she goes away."

"Fräulein von Bartels!" exclaimed the young man. "Oh, my child, let me take you home or hide you somewhere."

"Are you so frightened of Fräulein von Bartels, Heini?"

"Yes," with great energy; "of course I am."

"Ah! she is the second string to your bow, so you don't want her to see you and me together."

"Don't be absurd, Erna! You know what a tongue she has. She does not care what she says. She hates anyone with youth and good looks, poor thing. They say she had a terrible experience in her own life! And the General is giving a musical party next week!"

"Yes, it comes in very conveniently. She will have something really interesting to relate this time. It's very cowardly of you to hide yourself behind the curtain, Heini; and you an officer."

"If she only sees *you*—it won't be so bad. Perhaps she doesn't know I live here."

Ernestine laughed. "Trust Fräulein von Bartels!" she cried; "and now attention—she comes."

One after another they had come and gone. Fräulein von Bartels, the Hansens, Frau Jürgensen, Emilie Paap. No sooner had the last named passed the window on her way to her friend the dressmaker's, than Ernestine sprang up. "The last; and it is exactly five," she cried. "Oh, Heini, Heini, I've done it, and it can't ever be undone. Tell me that you don't think I'm quite horrid; tell me you don't despise me entirely."

He rose, too, and stood beside her.

"Erna, I couldn't do that, but——"

"But you wonder what I did it for? How dense men are! There, Heini, I wouldn't have trusted anyone, but you are——" she broke off with a sob. The strain had been too much for her.

He drew her to him.

"Oh, don't! I'm going home now—quick, so as to get there before Otto returns to get ready or before mamma comes back. And you must prepare for the General's. It will all end happily, if you still like me."

"*If* I still like you!" She released herself and left the room as abruptly as she had entered it. He followed to find her fumbling with the handle of his front door.

"You must let me see you home."

"Oh, no. I haven't the courage to face Otto with you; supposing we met him."

He held the door open, and the girl fled through and out into the street. How horribly brightly the sun shone! Was every soul in Klatscheburg pointing the finger of scorn at her?

She slipped into the house without encountering Otto, and up to her room. When the Gräfin returned, she found her sitting at her embroidery frame in a small sitting-room at the back of the house.

Ernestine was quite calm again now. After she had helped her mother to remove her hat and cloak, she listened sympathetically to the Gräfin's account of her visit to the old lady at the Stift.

"It's very nice there, though I suppose it is a dull life," said the Gräfin; "but I mustn't set you against it, my poor child, for it's there you'll have to end your days. Penniless girls don't marry, and it's a mercy your poor father made *that* provision for you and your sisters."

"It would be easy to avoid ending my days in the Stift," observed Ernestine in a low voice.

"Yes, if you would marry the Baron," said the Gräfin fiercely. "Ah, in my young days girls didn't refuse to do what they were told! Things were arranged differently, then."

"There's still another way, mamma. Let me marry Heinrich Braun. He has both his eyes intact, and does not limp."

"I gave you my answer to that months ago."

"Yes; but since then something has happened."

"What has happened?" sneered the elder lady. "Has he found out that he can trace his descent back to Frederick Barbarossa, or have they given him one of the brand-new titles that they seem to scatter broadcast nowadays?"

"Neither, mamma; but this has happened: I have been to see Heinrich alone at his rooms in the High Street."

For a moment Ernestine regretted the confession, for she thought that the Gräfin was going to have a fit. Her face grew purple, and three efforts to speak proved unsuccessful. Then she gasped out a request for further particulars.

"It was like this: I thought you would never give your consent, so I went this afternoon to—to say a long good-bye to poor Heini."

"Heini?" gasped the Gräfin.

"To say a long good-bye," continued the girl, steeling her heart to her mother's misery. "You know his rooms are on the ground floor of the house in which Frau Jens lives, so I expect *she* knows I went there."

"Frau Jens," repeated the half-dazed Gräfin.

"While I was there the princesses came to try on their dresses, so I am afraid *they* will know, too."

"The princesses!" cried the Gräfin; her senses seemed to be returning as the full horror of the thing was disclosed to her.

"Yes, and the Freifräulein von Dietrich-Hulst—very unfortunate, she is a terribly strict person, and the footman was in attendance, of course."

"Fräulein von Dietrich-Hulst and the footman!" For once in her life, the Gräfin forgot social distinctions so far as to mention these two personages in the same breath.

"Well, then, I fear Fräulein von Bartels must know—for she came also about a dress."

"Fräulein von Bartels!" This time the Gräfin's voice rose to a scream. "Unhappy child! The von Rosenkrantzes are disgraced forever."

"Well—it's unfortunate," continued the girl, who appeared to grow calmer as her mother became more excited; "and I suppose it's really a mere trifle that the Hansens—wife and daughter, I think, of an advocate—were there to-day. I know they saw us through the window."

"The wife and daughter of an advocate; and these people can point the finger of scorn at a von Rosenkrantz!"

"Then there was a Frau, I forget the name, wife of a Holm fisher. Frau Jens says the Holm fishers are quite a class apart and do not mix with the other townspeople. But Frau Jens will have told her, and I fear she will have carried the news down to the Holm fisherfolk."

"The Holm fishers!" By this time the Gräfin was too faint to do more than gasp out the words.

"There was no one else except Emilie Paap, who keeps the nice little shop this end of the High Street."

The Gräfin was speechless now and a dead silence prevailed for some minutes. It was growing dusk. Ernestine relinquished her embroidery and waited. She began to fear the shock had half-killed her mother, when the latter spoke.

"Unhappy child! You have put yourself into the power of

one who cannot be expected to have the feelings of a gentleman. But it is too late for regrets. He *must* marry you."

"I expect he won't mind *that* much," murmured the young girl very low.

"Ha, ha!" laughed the Gräfin hysterically. "Ha, ha! The son of a comb-maker will have to be compelled to marry a von Rosenkrantz. Your brother must go and fetch him. He must promise you marriage in our presence. If he will not, Otto must call him out. Ha, ha! I, born a von Thurheim, and married to a von Rosenkrantz, and I live to see this!" She paused again.

"What did he say to you? What did he do?" She burst out again after a little, "What insult did he offer to the daughter of the house of Rosenkrantz—this low-born Braun?"

Ernestine rose now and spoke with dignity: "Heinrich Braun is a gentleman. I was as safe with him as with my own brother. I wish to marry him, and if you and Otto will give your consent to the betrothal, it can take place soon. Heinrich loves me. It will be the fulfillment of his dearest wish." She left the room.

The Gräfin was not one to do things by halves, and having once accepted the humiliating necessity of marrying her daughter to the young Lieutenant, she did not spare herself any more than she did others.

The following morning Otto was dispatched to bring Braun, willing or unwilling, to the house of the von Rosenkrantzes.

The Gräfin and her daughter awaited him in the great reception-room.

The Gräfin seated herself on an immense sofa and made her daughter stand beside her. When the two young men entered she rose in all the glory of her stiff black silk. Braun kissed the hand she held out, bowing low to her and her daughter.

"I sent for you to-day, Herr Lieutenant Braun," she said calmly, "to ask if you will marry my daughter, Ernestine Augusta von Rosenkrantz?"

"If she will have me," answered the young man simply, as he took his lady-love's hand. "If she will have me, she will make me the happiest man in Germany."

The princesses invited Ernestine to the Castle to offer her their congratulations, in spite of Fräulein von Dietrich-Hulst.

"We are so glad, dear Ernestine," cried Princess Helene,

warmly. "We are so glad it is not that horrid old Baron with the lame leg. Of course, as it's an officer, it's all right, and we can see you as often as before. And we admire you very much for knowing your own mind, and we won't let old Fräulein Hulst say anything against you."

"And if I marry a reigning prince," added Victorine, "he shall have a post at the Court, and shall be ennobled. I shall not forget."

Little Frau Jens had her bill paid, and made the dress for the betrothal feast and the trousseau, and was well content.

And the family plate was redeemed on the eve of the betrothal, and did not again return to the Lombard's in the High Street.

# HE Chef of the Belton Castle: A South American Sketch, by James C. Plummer*

CAPTAIN BRIGGS, as he gazed up the harbor from the bridge of the iron tramp steamer *Belton Castle*, expressed his feelings in profanity that went on down wind to the ears of the skipper of an American schooner, who looked toward its author, envying him his command of language.

With cargo stowed, steam hissing from the escape pipes, and everything in readiness for a start on a voyage to Hamburg via La Guayra, the *Belton Castle* was detained in Cartagena harbor by a very prosaic matter—she had no cook. Ratcliff, or "Rats," as he was familiarly styled by the crew, who had presided over the galley of the steamer, had gone ashore and stayed there. In place of returning, he had sent a note to the captain saying he had been taken very ill, most likely with yellow fever, and it would be impossible for him to return to his post. He had, however, engaged a substitute, a skilful French cook, to take his place, and he would join the ship early the following morning. Hence the captain's wistful looks shoreward and hence his profanity as the cook came not.

Captain Briggs had not accepted the statement of Ratcliff as a fact; he had denounced it with many lurid adjectives as a fake, and expressed a desire to come up with his former cook; but the mate was optimistic.

"Rats wasn't much of a cook," said he, "and these French cooks are wonders. They can make a fine soup out of an old gum boot if you give 'em the chance."

Unconvinced, the captain continued his watch from the bridge, consigning Ratcliff and the substitute to a warmer climate than even Cartagena enjoyed that very hot morning, when he suddenly exclaimed:

*Written for Short Stories.

"Here comes the lubber."

From out of the steaming mist that overhung the harbor, a boat shot towards the steamer, and in a few minutes the French cook stood on deck, and the captain was ringing full speed ahead.

The substitute was a man of medium size, clad in garments bearing a remarkable similarity to those worn by the late Mr. Ratcliff. He also wore a red handkerchief bound very low over his forehead, and, with his swarthy complexion, resembled a Spanish pirate more than a peaceful French cook.

"Looks like a Spanish dago," remarked the captain, with discontent. "I can smell the garlic on him."

"He's a Frenchman all right," replied the optimistic mate. "I can tell 'em. I've made lots of trips to Bordeaux and Havre. I'll bet that dago can cook like a breeze. Hello, parly voo frank say, old fellow?"

"Oui, Senor," answered the cook; "I spick Inglis, too."

"I'm glad he can speak English," remarked the mate, cheerfully. "I hate to talk French on an English ship."

"Tell him to go forward and get to work," growled the much-tried captain. "Tell him in Hebrew, if you like, but tell him."

In response to this suggestion, the French chef hastened to the galley, bearing with him a bulky package, and began his duties.

"Captain Briggs," said the mate, thoughtfully, "do you remember those hot biscuits that American cook used to bake when we were running between Mexico and New York?"

"I should say I did," replied the captain with eagerness; "I could eat a half bushel of 'em right now."

"I'll bet this Parly-voo can bake those biscuits so they'll melt in your mouth. S'pose we have 'em for dinner. "Rats" couldn't make 'em, and I am sick of those bloody tortillas on shore."

"Good," assented the captain, "have 'em. Smokin' hot, you know."

"Smokin' hot," echoed the mate, as, with his jaws snapping covetously, he hastened forward.

"Here, Parly-voo," he cried, "bake biscuits for dinner. You know, bisky, hot, crisp, in little lumps, you know."

"Si, Senor," replied the chef, with a smile, "biskee, littee lump, bake for deener. I bake 'im," and he started at work

with such enthusiasm that the mate went aft exultingly, and reported progress.

"That chap's a cook. I can see it with one eye," said he.

"He don't seem to know the ropes very well," remarked Captain Briggs.

He certainly did not. He handled the utensils as awkwardly as one could imagine a man who had never seen a pot or a pan, and the way he set about making the biscuits would have stricken a housekeeper with wonder.

But the mate refused to be discouraged.

"Those cooks are queer fellows," said he; "I knew a splendid cook in London who would bust a half dozen dishes a day, and nothing was thought of it."

"You seem to know a lot about cooks," growled the captain, enviously.

It was well for the chef that the desire for hot biscuit made the officers less exacting than usual, otherwise he would have been overwhelmed with a storm of invective, for he spilled dirty water on the deck, and cast refuse in the wind's eye, and so bespattered the ship. He was, however, unrebuked.

As the *Belton Castle* was sailed on economical lines, she carried no steward, and the chef himself bore the dinner to the cabin, followed closely by the officers, their faces red with longing. With a graceful flourish the chef placed on the table two fowls, presumably stewed, but looking like two rocks surrounded by slimy shoal water, and a plate piled up with unwholesome looking lumps of dough, exhaling a greasy steam. Then, apparently well satisfied with the result of his skill, he retired to the deck, while the officers gazed at the table in stony silence.

Presently the mate emerged slowly from the cabin, his brow corrugated with wrath. He approached the chef until in front of the galley, and then dropped one of the biscuits on the deck, where it fell with the dull sound of a piece of putty.

"You herring-gutted son of a Parly-voo," shouted the mate, "what kind of a thing do you call that?" pointing to the biscuit.

"Not neece?" exclaimed the chef, with a look of surprise.

"Neece!" bellowed the mate, "no, it's not neece. Look at it, you lubber; do you think we can eat putty?" and he kicked the biscuit against the hatch combing.

"Eet was acceedent, Senor," explained the chef, "he want more vat you call 'im to make 'im raise."

"Why didn't you put it in, then?" snarled the mate. "What sort of a bally bad cook are you, anyway?"

Before the chef could frame a reply to this query the captain darted up the companion ladder and vengefully hurled a biscuit at the chef's head. It fortunately missed him and fell with a plump into the sea.

"Sank like a lump o' lead," muttered the mate, gazing at the spot where it fell.

"See here, Mr. Dago," snorted the captain, "I don't want any more good flour spiled or I'll spile you. And I don't want no more such cooking, or I'll put a half dozen of these putty balls to your head and heave you overboard."

"And you'd sink to bottom if it was a million fathoms with that ballast aboard," chimed in the mate.

In spite of all these reproaches and reflections on his skill the chef did not allow his temper to be ruffled. He waved his arms, insisted it was an "acceedent," and that next time it would be "ver mooch neecer."

"I wonder if he biled or baked those biscuits," pondered the mate. The captain shook his head gloomily; the problem was beyond him. The cooking did not improve, it became worse. The officers munched dry ship bread seasoned with many oaths, while even the crew, used as they were to bread shortened with slush, turned up their noses at the production of the chef and became mutinous.

"Just wait 'till we reach La Guayra," said the captain, with a deep aspiration, "I'll kick this dago down the gangplank."

"Dump him over the side," suggested the mate. "It 'ud be a Christian act, fo' he'll cook for some other ship and drive 'em mad."

However tempted he was, the captain refused the drastic method of the mate, and swore thankfully when La Guayra was only a night's journey away.

It was on a hot, soggy morning that the *Belton Castle* dropped anchor off La Guayra, and the captain was just about giving orders to lower a boat and have the unwelcome cook put ashore, when his ship was hailed by a skiff, evidently headed for her.

"What do those bloody dagoes want?" growled the captain.

"General De Lima! General De Lima!" shouted the occupants of the skiff, waving a Columbian flag and gesticulating as if mad.

"By the holy pope, look at the cook," screamed the mate.

The captain hastily gazed in the direction intimated, and beheld his cook arrayed in the glittering uniform of a Colombian officer, with a gleaming sword dangling at his belt. Removing his chapeau, he advanced to the ship's side and bowed to the men in the boat, who, at the sight of his face, became perfectly frenzied with enthusiasm, waving both the flag and their hands, and rending the air with vivas and other acclamations.

The eyes of the captain, having wandered from his martial-looking cook to the gesticulating crowd in the boat, now fastened themselves on vacancy, and their owner appeared to be in a trance of amazement, from which he was awakened by the approach of his cook.

"I tank you to bring me to La Guayra on your sheep, Capitan," said he, bowing low; "I sorry you no please my cooking."

"Who are you, anyway?" gasped the mystified mariner.

"General De Lima, of the patriot Colombian armee, Senor Capitan," replied he. "I oblige fly from Cartagena to save my life. I pay Senor Ratcliff ten dollar, he fall sick, I take he place on your sheep. Carrambo, I no cook. I try cook save my life. I tank you, Senor Capitan."

"I'd like to meet Ratcliff," said the captain, longingly.

"Senor Capitan," continued the General, "will you be so kind have lower zee ladder so I get in zee boat?"

"Mr. Hoyt," called the captain, "have the gangplank lowered so General De Lima can get in the boat. He is a passenger, and must be treated as one. He has paid his passage and worked it too, in a way."

The mate's voice sounded over the ship, and in a few minutes General De Lima was in the boat shaking hands with his friends, nor did he forget, as the boat sped towards the city, to many times salute the officers of the *Belton Castle* by gracefully waving his hand.

"You can tell a French cook as soon as you lay eyes on him, I believe, Mr. Hoyt," remarked the captain, with sarcasm.

"Those dagoes have long memories," retorted the mate, vindictively, "and if I was you I'd steer clear of Colombia for awhile, for if that fellow is ever president he won't forget that you tried to knock out his brains with his own biscuit."

"Have the boat lowered, Mr. Hoyt," said the captain, with dignity, "I am going ashore to try to find a cook."

# MOTHER: A Story in Imitation of Hans Andersen, by Alexander Dumas, the Younger. Translated from the French by Neil Carew*

A MOTHER was seated beside the cradle of her child. One had only to look at her to read in her face that she was a prey to the deepest grief. The child was pale, his eyes were closed, he breathed with difficulty, and each breath was heavy, like a sigh. The mother feared to see him die before her eyes, and gazed at the poor little creature with a sadness mute as despair.

There were three knocks on the door.

"Come in," said the mother.

When the door was opened and shut and she still did not hear the sound of footsteps, she turned round. Then she saw a poor old woman whose body was partly enveloped in a horsehair gown, a poor garment to be one's sole covering. The winter was severe; behind the frosted panes it was ten degrees below freezing, and the wind was cutting. The old woman was barefoot, and this was undoubtedly the reason why her steps made no sound on the floor.

As the old woman trembled with cold, and as the child seemed to sleep more quietly since her coming, the mother rose to stir the fire. The old woman sat down in her place and began to rock the child, singing a song of intense sadness in an unknown tongue.

"Do you not think that I shall be able to keep him?" asked the mother of her gloomy guest.

*Translated for Short Stories.

saw Jean enter

The mother did as she was bid, but in the middle of the forest the path forked. She stopped, not knowing if she should go to the right or to the left.

At the angle of the two roads there was a thorny bush, which had neither leaves nor flowers, because it was winter; instead, it was covered with rime and icicles hung from each of its branches.

"Have you seen Death pass by with my child?" asked the mother of the bush.

"Yes," it answered, "but I will not tell you what road she took until you have warmed me with your body. For, you see, I am nothing but an icicle."

The mother, without hesitating, fell upon her knees and pressed the bush to her until it thawed; the thorns pierced her bosom, and the blood flowed in great drops. But as her breast was torn and her blood flowed, the bush, which was a hawthorn, put forth the most beautiful green leaves and pink petals, for such is the warmth of a mother's heart.

And then the bush pointed out the road she should follow. She ran on and came to the edge of a large lake, on which neither sail nor rowboat was to be seen. The lake was too much frozen to allow one to cross it by swimming, and not enough for one to walk on it. But, impossible as it seemed, the distressed mother must pass over it. She kneeled, hoping that God would perform a miracle for her sake."

"Do not hope for the impossible," said the spirit of the lake, raising his white head above the water. "Let us rather see if we cannot make a bargain. I like to collect pearls, and your eyes are the brightest I have ever seen; will you weep into my waters until your eyes fall out? For then your tears will become pearls and your eyes diamonds. Afterward I will carry you to my other bank, to the huge hothouse where Death lives, and where she tends the trees and flowers that represent human lives."

"Oh, is that all you ask?" said the poor woman. "I will give you all, all, to reach my child."

And she wept; she wept so much that her eyes, having no more tears, followed the tears, which became pearls, and fell into the lake, where they became diamonds.

Then the spirit of the lake put his arms out of the water, took her in them, and in a minute carried her to the other bank. Then he put her down on the shore, where the palace

of living flowers stood. It was an immense palace, all of glass, many miles long, warmed to a gentle heat by invisible stoves in winter, and in summer by the sun.

The poor mother could not see it because she had no eyes. She groped until she found the door; but at the threshold she was met by the keeper of the palace.

"What do you seek here?" asked the keeper.

"Ah, a woman!" cried the mother. "She will have pity on me."

Then, to the woman, she said:

"I am come to seek Death, who has taken my child from me."

"How did you come here, and who has helped you?" asked the woman.

"The good God helped me," said the mother. "He had pity on me. And you, too, you will have pity on me and tell me where I shall find my child."

"I do not know him," replied the old woman, "and as for you, you can no longer see. Many trees and flowers have died to-night. Death will soon come to replant them; for you must know that every human being has his tree or his flower of life, according to his nature. They look like other plants, but they have a heart, and this heart beats forever; for when men cease to live on earth, they live in heaven. And, as the hearts of children beat as well as the hearts of grown persons, perhaps you will be able to recognize the beating of your child's by feeling it."

"Yes, yes," said the mother, "I am sure I shall know it."

"How old was your child?"

"One year; he has smiled for six months, and he spoke to me for the first time last evening."

"I will lead you to the hall of the year-old children; but what will you give me?"

"What have I left to give?" asked the mother. "You see I have nothing; but if I can go to the end of the earth barefoot for you I will do so!"

"I have no business at the end of the earth," answered the old woman, dryly, "but if you will give me your long and beautiful black locks in exchange for my gray ones, I will do what you wish."

"Is that all?" asked the poor creature. "Oh, take them, take them!"

And she gave her long and beautiful black locks in exchange for the gray ones of the old woman.

Then they passed into the great, warm greenhouse of Death, where flowers, trees, plants, and bushes are ranged and marked according to their age. There were hyacinths under bell-glasses, and acquatic plants floating on the surface of the basins, some fresh and healthy, others sick and half faded; water serpents lay coiled round these, and black shellfish crawled in and out among their stems. There were splendid palms, great oaks, huge plane trees and sycamores, heather and flowering thyme. Each tree, plant, flower, even each blade of grass, had its name, and represented a human life; some in Europe, others in Africa, these in China, those in Greenland. There were large trees in little boxes which seemed on the point of bursting, they were so narrow. There were also small plants in large vases, ten times too large for them. The boxes that were too narrow represented the poor. The vases that were too large represented the rich. At last the poor mother reached the hall of babies.

"Here it is," said the old woman.

Then the mother listened to the beating of the hearts and felt those that beat. She had so often laid her hand on the breast of the poor little creature whom Death had taken from her that she would have recognized the beating of her child's heart among a million others.

"This is he! This is he!" she cried, at last, stretching both her hands toward a little cactus which drooped, sickly, in a corner.

"Do not touch your child's flower," said the old woman, "but stay near it. I expect Death every minute, and when she comes do not let her pluck the plant. If she persists, threaten to do the same to two other flowers; she will be afraid, for a command from God is required before any flower or tree is picked, and she must render an account to Him for all the human plants."

"Merciful heaven!" said the mother. "Why am I so cold?"

"Death comes," said the old woman. "Stay here and remember what I have told you."

Then she departed.

As Death came nearer and nearer, the mother felt the cold increase; she could not see, but she knew that Death stood before her.

"How did you find your way here?" questioned Death, "and, above all, how did you get here before me?"

"I am a mother!" she answered.

And Death put out her skinny arm toward the cactus. But the mother covered it with her hands so effectually and so tenderly that she did not hurt a single leaf. Then Death breathed upon the mother's hands, and she felt that the breath was cold as if it came from a mouth of marble. Her muscles relaxed, and her fingers fell from the plant, weak and cold.

"Foolish woman! You cannot struggle against me," said Death.

"No, but God can," replied the mother.

"I only obey His commands," answered Death. "I am His gardener; I take these trees and flowers which He has planted on earth, and replant them in the great garden of Paradise."

"Then give me back my child," said the mother, beseeching her with tears, "or pluck my flower with his."

"It may not be," said Death. "You have still more than thirty years to live."

"More than thirty years!" cried the mother, in despair. "And what would you, Death, that I should do with these thirty years? Give them to some mother who is more happy, as I have given my blood to the bush, my eyes to the lake, and my locks to the old woman."

"No," said Death, "it is God's command, and I may not change it."

"So be it, then," said the mother. "It is between us two only. Death, if you touch my child's plant I will pluck these flowers."

And she seized two young fuchsias with both hands.

"Do not touch those flowers!" cried Death. "You say that you are unhappy, and you would make another mother still more unhappy than you; for these two fuchsias are twins."

"Oh!" gasped the poor woman. And she let go of the two fuchsias.

There was a silence, in which Death seemed to feel a touch of pity.

"See," said Death, giving the mother two beautiful diamonds, "here are your eyes. I picked them out of the lake; take them; they are brighter and more beautiful than ever. I return them to you; look with them into this deep water, which flows beside you. I will tell you the names of these two

flowers that you wished to pluck, and you shall see therein the futures of those children's human lives. You will learn, then, what you would have destroyed; you will see what things you would have brought to naught."

And, receiving her eyes, the mother looked into the stream. It was a magnificent spectacle to see what a future of happiness and goodness was reserved for these two beings whom she had so nearly annihilated. Their lives flowed in an atmosphere of joy, amid a concert of blessings.

"Ah," said the mother, putting her hand over her eyes, "I have been prevented from doing a great wrong."

"Look!" said Death.

The two fuchsias had disappeared, and in their place was a little cactus which took the form of a child; then the child grew and became a young man, full of stormy passions; all was tears, violence, and sorrows. He ended by committing suicide.

"Ah, God, what is this?" cried the mother.

"It is your child," said Death.

A moan broke from the poor woman and she fell to the ground. Then, after awhile, she raised her arms to heaven and said:

"Oh God, since you have taken him, keep him. What you have done is well done."

Then Death stretched out her arm toward the little cactus. But the mother stayed her arm with one hand, and with the other returned her eyes.

"Wait," she said, "that I may not see him die."

The poor mother lived on for thirty years, blind but resigned. God placed the child among the angels; the mother he set in the ranks of martyrs.

# THE Major's Unexpected Wedding: The Story of a Sudden Resolve, by Laura C. Gaylord*

THE clock on the mantel gave a little cluck by way of warning that it meant to strike. The Major looked up at it reproachfully. He was so eminently satisfied! Only ten o'clock, to be sure; still, a man must be fresh in the morning, and the Major laid aside the book of poems from which he had been reading aloud, and rose to go.

Elizabeth put down her work and rose, too, smiling.

"This is an anniversary, Will," she said.

"An anniversary?" repeated the Major, wonderingly.

"Yes. Don't you know? Oh, but men always forget. It is left to us women——"

"An anniversary?" said the Major, again. "You mean——"

"Yes, I mean——" she mocked him, affectionately. "I mean—that ten years ago to-night we became engaged!"

"Ten years ago!" said the Major. "Ten years ago at ten o'clock exactly. Wait a minute, that clock'll let go in just a minute, and then—it becomes my duty to kiss you in honor of the occasion."

He stood laughingly with his arm around her shoulders until the chime began, then kissed her and held her off from him for surveyal.

"Bless my heart," said he, "you haven't changed a bit that I can see; same dark eyes, same dark hair, same girl altogether. And yet—you are different, too. There's more of the woman about you, somehow."

"And small wonder," cried Elizabeth. "I'm getting on,

*Written for Short Stories.

my dear boy. I was twenty-seven then, and now—I hesitate to name it!"

"And I was thirty then, and now—I feel hesitation myself!" cried the major. "Forty? Lord, what a chilly sound it has!"

He looked again into the eyes of his lady love and bade her good-night and went away, but the chilly feeling was with him still, and it followed him into the hall and down the steps and started with him down the street. The Major set a glowing cigar between his teeth and stuffed his hands well down into his pockets.

"Thirty-seven," said he, "and forty! Autumnal, both of 'em. Suggestive of the sere and yellow. Bless my heart," said the Major. "Bless my heart!"

He tramped on through the frosty air, and as he went he thought.

Thirty-seven! Thirty-seven! Thirty-seven! The number rang in his ears with an odd persistence. Thirty-seven, and unmarried. Thirty-seven, and cut off by her engagement to him from all chance of marrying another man. Thirty-seven, and dependent still upon her father for every bite she ate, for every stitch she wore; whereas, by rights, she should be depending upon him—him, the Major, who swore he loved her—for these and all other things!

The Major reeled under the shock of the revelation, and came up against the wall of a building for support. Lord, what a cur he was—and it had never come home to him before! He had left this sweet and charming Elizabeth of his to wither into old-maidenhood in her father's house, and why? At first because he had not been able to support her as she was supported at home; but later—in these past five years of his prosperity—simply because he had been so at ease, so selfishly comfortable in their existing relations, that the need, in honor, for a change in those relations had simply never occurred to him. Bah, it had an evil taste!

"It shall not go on!" cried the Major, opening his eyes, which he had closed upon a reeling world. "It shall be stopped at once!"

Bravely said! He felt a rush of returning self-respect as the words fell from his lips, although his plans were of the vaguest; but as he straightened himself to go on, the glit-

ter of a brass tablet against the stones of the building caught his eye.

"Christ Church, the Reverend Chester L. Towart, Rector," it ran.

Towart. That was his friend Towart, surely. And Towart was a minister, and it was the duty of ministers to marry people. The Major looked around him. There was the rectory, next door, connecting with the church. The Major walked in at the gate, up the steps, and rang the bell.

The woman who answered was sorry to say that Mr. Towart was not in. He had dined out. With the Reverend Mr. Glencoe.

The Major consulted his watch. Twenty minutes after ten. He could catch him there. Towart and Glencoe always sat late over their theological discussions. Moreover, Glencoe lived not far from Elizabeth Hastings. The Major boarded a car that came clanging along, and went back the way he had come.

He found Glencoe peacefully occupied with a pipe and a pile of sermon paper.

"Ah! Major, good evening," he said. "Towart? Yes, certainly. He left here an hour ago; was going to stop in somewhere on the way down; the Martins, I believe. Had some errand concerning a fair. Do you know, I suspect a growing attachment there. Eh? Ha! ha! ha!"

But the Major could not stop to hear Glencoe's facetious imaginings about Towart. He had an attachment of his own to see to, one that had been hanging on quite long enough. He took the address of the Martins, boarded a car, went off across town, and walked a block. The lofty abode of the Martins was in darkness. Towart must have gone.

As the Major stood at the steps, unable, for the moment, to think what he wanted to do, another house caught his eye, a house where he remembered dining.

"Judge Willey," he said. "By Jove, I had forgotten!" and he plunged across the street and rang the bell.

"A license?" cried Judge Willey, in his library, opening his pink mouth in a round O of perturbation. "But, my dear—my *dear* boy, consider my smoking jacket, my slippers, consider the hour! Wouldn't—a—wouldn't to-morrow do, now?"

But no. It was evident that nothing else than to-night

would suit this hot-headed lad of forty, and in the end the rotund little Judge trotted obligingly off to don coat and shoes for the ride down town.

"Most extraordinary, most extraordinary," he murmured, as he trotted downstairs again. "What possible need—er, Major, the young lady consents? It is Miss Hastings, of course?"

Yes, it was Miss Hastings, the Major informed him, and breathed relief that the first question was not pressed. For had she consented? Not yet, not yet, but he had hopes!

The early slumbers of a janitor were ruthlessly disturbed, and when, after a little, he had locked the two men out and was free to return to his bed, the Major was in possession of a paper which meant more to him than the wealth of the Klondyke. He put the Judge on a car with a somewhat incoherent murmur of thanks, and boarded another which took him to the apartment-house where he lived. In the office he called up Towart by telephone.

"Hello, Towart!" he called. "Hello! hello! hell——well, why didn't you speak up plainer. I couldn't hear you. Say, Towart, I want you. Don't go to bed yet awhile. Got your boots off? Well, put 'em on again. I'll call for you in fifteen minutes. Want you to do something for me. Eh? Oh, nothing—nothing much. Or rather, it—it is something, of course, only—I can't explain here. Put on your boots, there's a good fellow," and, ringing off hastily, he took the elevator to his own apartment.

Closing the door, he looked about with an eye which was trying to adjust itself to the view-point of a woman, a bride. As he came up the street, he had had grave doubts of these apartments of his, but now that he came to examine them—really, he must tip those servants to-morrow. Everything was in the daintiest of order, and the kitchen was simply spandy. It was lucky, in a way, that his cook went home over-night and that he got his own coffee in the morning. It would give more time for adjustment, and prevent anything like awkwardness.

The kitchen clock called him back to the flying moments. Towart would be asleep in his chair. It lacked only a quarter to twelve! The Major fled into his bedroom, brushed his hair violently, rushed out into the hallway to ring for a carriage,

then into the drawing-room, where stood an immense mahogany secretary. The Major unlocked a drawer and rummaged until he found a ring, a plain gold seal with his family crest and motto upon it.

"Heavy for a woman," he muttered. "But she won't mind. Anyway, it will have to do."

The carriage was waiting when he reached the street. Towart answered the door when he rang.

"What on earth is it?" he cried. "Birth, death, marriage?"

"Marriage," said the Major, briefly. "Come on."

"Wait a minute. Whose?"

"Mine," said the Major. "Come on," and he put out a hand to hurry his friend. The latter evaded it, however, and disappeared into the house.

"Hold on," was all he said.

"My togs," he explained when he reappeared, waving a small bag before the eyes of the Major. "I don't know what's happening, and I rather think you're crazy, but if you are going to be married you want it done in style. Come on."

The drive was taken in silence. The Major, sitting well back in his corner, seemed to be lost in thought. Watching him keenly by the intermittent light of the street lamps, however, Towart was informed, by a certain biting of the lips and wild fixity of gaze, that he was not as free from emotion as his bodily quiet would seem to imply. There were a dozen things Towart burned to know, but, by a mighty effort, he smothered his curiosity and interest and kept the questions to himself.

When the carriage stopped, the Major sprang from it without a word. The minister, uncertain what was expected of him, sat still for a moment, when certain sounds so wrought upon him that he rose and followed after.

The Major stood in the yard of a large house, throwing pebbles at a second-story window. As Towart came up he stooped for a fresh handful of gravel. At the same moment the window opened.

"What in the name of—Major, is that you?" came a voice, heavily charged with surprise and other emotions.

"Yes, it is I," answered the Major.

"But what in—the—solar system do you want?"

"Elizabeth. I've come to be married," said the Major. If he had had any quakings in the silent meditation in the carriage they were stilled now. He knew exactly what he wished, and he took the short cut to this end with a simplicity of purpose which made of diplomatic meanderings mere futility.

"I have come to be married," he said. "I have kept Elizabeth waiting long enough, Heaven knows! I have been singularly selfish and blind, I think, but now that I have my sight again, I want to begin to make it up to her as soon as may be. The minister is here. Will you call your daughter?"

There was silence in the window; Towart, making himself small in the shadow of a bush, held his breath; then, going to the point as directly as the Major himself had done, Mr. Hastings spoke:

"It is a little sudden, just here at the end, but I don't know that any reasonable objection can be made on the score of haste. There is time in ten years for almost any one to make up his mind. I guess we may as well clinch the matter now as any time. I'll speak to Elizabeth," and the window came down.

A brief period of waiting ensued. Neither man spoke. Towart, sitting on the steps with his bag between his knees, realized that his thoughts were too rapid and complex for expression in any language at his command. In fact, he doubted if the language had been invented that would be equal to it. The Major had no thoughts; he had entered upon a career of action.

They were let in by Mr. Hastings, dressed, apparently, with as much perfection as if he had taken hours to it. He was a short, thickset man, with close-cropped gray hair and a firm mouth. The Major brushed by him and made his way to the library. Just inside the door, however, he came to a stop, and blankness succeeded to his vivid look, for he had expected Elizabeth to be there by the table, where he had left her. Crestfallen, he fell back and let the other men enter.

Another period of waiting followed. Mr. Hastings, having stirred the fire and procured from the dining-room a decanter and some glasses, stood upon the hearthrug with his short legs wide apart and talked finance with Towart. He talked in an undertone, as people speak of worldly matters at a funeral. It gave the Major a chill between the shoulders

to hear him. The clergyman, while he conversed, was occupied with some affairs of his own in the corner. The Major alone had nothing to do, and it is doubtful whether he could have done it if he had had. He stood stiffly beside the chair Elizabeth had occupied earlier, and kept his eyes upon the door. When Mrs. Hastings entered, stout, hastily dressed and much perturbed, he went forward, shook hands without speaking, led her to a chair and resumed his attitude. Silence fell. Even Mr. Hastings's murmur ceased. Everything seemed to wait.

And then there was a rustle of skirts in the quiet of the hallway and Elizabeth came, dressed as she had been earlier in the evening, in a crimson house-waist with a dark skirt. As the Major went forward and took her hands, she raised her eyes to his.

"My dear," he said, "if I have selfishly kept you waiting all these years, it was because you made me so happy that I never thought of anything else. Are you willing to forgive me the humiliation you must have suffered and trust yourself to me now?"

Her serious lips melted into a smile, and she touched his face softly with her finger tips.

"I have been happy, too, Will," she said, and the Major stooped and kissed her there before them all. Then he turned and led her to the clergyman, standing on the other side of the room in his fine white robes.

It seemed as if only then the meaning of it all came to Elizabeth. The Major felt her fingers tighten on his, saw the color rush to her face in a crimson flood, and he had a moment's dread that she would draw back, but she stood up bravely.

When they had been married, the Major kissed his wife and then he kissed her mother. It looked, for a moment, as if he meant to kiss her father, too, in his enthusiasm; but that gentleman warded him off and he went back and held the bride's hand quite boldly and publicly. There was one moment when the bride's mother thought seriously of crying, but she changed her mind and laughed instead with the rest, and they drank healths all round and nibbled cakes which the bride obligingly brought from the pantry. And Mr. Hastings helped the clergyman out of his robes and stood arm-in-arm with him

on the hearthrug, and they made jokes and everything was joyful.

"It's the most absurd wedding that ever was," said the bride.

"Might have had it years ago if Elizabeth would only let me jog the Major," remarked Mr. Hastings, "but she always said——"

"My *dear!*" cried Mrs. Hastings, apprehensively. But the Major was not attending. It was coming to him bit by bit as he looked into the eyes of his wife, that all these years he had been nothing more or less than a fool!

"We'll go home now, it is late," he said, jumping up "Towart, we'll take you down in the carriage."

"But Elizabeth—will Elizabeth go?" cried Elizabeth's mother.

The Major turned to his wife with something very like fright. Surely they could not keep her now. It did not seem to him that he could live without her for another hour, now that she was truly his. He looked back with contempt upon the mental condition of his former self, that self which had been content without a wife for ten long, empty years.

"You—you will go home with me, Elizabeth?"

Slowly Elizabeth looked around the room, at all the old familiar things, at her father, at her mother, and there was something very like homesickness in her eyes; but, coming to the Major, who was watching her anxiously, like a loving big dog, the look vanished.

"When you're married, you must obey," she quoted, with an uncertain little laugh.

"Yes, I will go—home, Will."

For a moment it looked to Mr. Hastings as if this time he certainly should not be able to ward off the Major, but he managed to interpose the person of the Reverend Mr. Towart as a buffer between himself and his ardent son-in-law, and the crisis was passed. When, however, the bridal pair (without Towart, who insisted that the car was much more suitable for him) were finally settled and about to start, amid a shower of barley hastily procured by the bride's father from a bag in a dark closet, said father suddenly rushed forward and tore the door open again.

"Major, you are not married," he declared. "You have no license. Elizabeth, get out."

The Major laid a detaining hand on the bride's arm.

"Don't you worry, Mr. Hastings," he said, calmly, "I've got that license in my inside pocket. Home, driver. Good-night," and he pulled the carriage to with a bang. Just so insolent does satisfaction make even a naturally well-mannered man!

And that is how the Major married his wife. So far as an outsider may judge, repentance has not yet come his way, in spite of the croaking old proverb about haste and leisure. But then, as the father of the bride had rather more than hinted, it wasn't so very hasty, after all.

# BORDER Life in Montenegro: A Story of Retribution by Reginald Wyon*

## Rumors.

IT is just a year ago that I last visited a certain little town named Andrijevica, and was subjected to much disappointment. The rumors which met me by the way to-day were certainly encouraging, but then things have a knack of blowing over and settling down in an amazingly short time on the Montenegrin borders.

However, I have come to stay until "something happens," a statement which calls forth great enthusiasm, for, within five minutes of my arrival, the room which has been placed at my disposal at the local baker's has filled with old acquaintances. There is Milos, the herculean son of the Voivoda, strong as a bull, yet as ticklish as a young maiden—a failing which it is useful to know when he gets playful and will wrestle; the veteran Corporal Slavo, who went with us last year to Velika, when we were surrounded by an excited mob of Albanians on the way, and who afterwards presented me with his pistol, a family heirloom; and smart young Marko, likewise a corporal, but half his comrade's age and of a boisterous disposition. He is very quiet and sedate to-day, yet I remember the last time we met—he and I had danced together, the quaint leaping dance of the Montenegrins. How the worthy borderers had laughed and applauded, and he had to be with difficulty restrained from firing his revolver into the ceiling of the very room in which we are now formally seated in a ring, with tobacco tins and miniature bottles of *raki* gravely circulating.

There are others, too, the young Kapetan and mayor of the town, the Voivoda's orderly, the "human telegraph," and the postmaster, of whom more anon, for I catch sight of the Voivoda himself walking down the

*From Blackwood's Magazine.

street with his adjutant. A minute later and we are shaking each other effusively by the hand, and I am led to a *han*, for they are convivial souls in Andrijevica, and the *raki* the best in the land. At the Voivoda's right hand I am lovingly pressed into a chair, and the table before us is loaded with glasses, for the guests are many. I heave a sigh of contentment, for of all the border clans the Vassović are the most sporting, splendid men, one and all. High and difficult passes cut them off from the rest of Montenegro, and the hawk-nosed Voivoda at my side is invested with nearly autocratic powers. He wields them well and judiciously, and how often, by tactful diplomacy, he has averted the invasion of his country by enormous hordes of savage Albanians, he alone can tell. In a sense he holds one of the most responsible posts in the Balkans, if not in Europe. Who can foretell the consequences should an army of Albanians overrun north-eastern Montenegro? and more than once it has been but a touch and go.

With a merry twinkle in his keen grey eyes he lifts his glass. "Thou hast no business to be here just now," he says, gravely, "but I bid thee welcome all the same."

"Then I shall see something," I begin; but he cuts me short.

"We did not speak of it," he says, still more gravely, but his eyes twinkle the more. "To-morrow we confer with the Turkish governor on the frontier, and perhaps further blood-shed will be avoided."

"Thou art too official, Gospodin Voivoda," I say, and we all laugh and clink glasses. But the Kommandir and right-hand man of the Voivoda takes pity upon me. He is a soldier, pure and simple, and he draws me on one side.

"Thou didst promise me last year," I say.

"I have not forgotten. Thou shalt come with my battalion, for we shall have more fighting; that I promise thee, if thou hast patience and a little time."

"To-morrow, though, is a conference," I murmur.

"Mere talk," rejoins Lazo, the Kommandir (commanding officer of a battalion). "It is not against the Turks that we fight *officially*, but against the Albanians. We have grass to mow on the borders on *our* land, and this the Turks will not allow. *They* say the land is theirs, but it is not so, and we shall mow the hay. It is ready waiting for the scythe."

He speaks this last sentence grimly, pausing suggestively before he proceeds. "For days a Commission was here striving to settle this question in peace. But thou knowest the Turk—words, nothing but words; and while even the Turkish officials were with ours, the Albanians came down and fought. Too much talk is not good, and our patience is exhausted. We, the men of Vassović, will be put off no longer from that which is ours."

"Quite right, Kommandir," I answer; "the sooner the better." And the slender, grey-haired officer—grey not from age, for he cannot be more than thirty-five, but perhaps from countless border-fights—shakes himself and laughs.

"But will the Voivoda let me go with ye?" I ask suddenly.

"Ask nothing and go; we do not speak of these things," he repeats, winking.

Evening is coming on apace, and the scene is very peaceful. Men walk up and down the only street slowly, in twos and threes. At the doors of the little houses women congregate and gossip. Now a man swings along, rifle slung from shoulder, saluting smartly as he passes our table—he is from the mountains which surround the town as a wall. A horse clatters loudly up the steep path from the river, where his rider has been watering it, sitting bare-backed and riding like a cowboy. Our glasses clink, are emptied, and refilled instantaneously by the attentive host. Jokes, laughter, and toasts follow in confused succession, but not a word of war or of fighting—beyond a jest at my expense—for such topics are of too little interest.

It is very pleasant, and I feel as if I were in the midst of old and dear friends. Then the moon rises slowly over the ridge before us, and still we sit on, chatting of many things. Half-a-dozen Albanians stride past, likewise with rifle, bandolier, and revolver, taking a short cut across Montenegrin territory. It is characteristic of the Montenegrin that he lets the Albanian come and go as he pleases, opens his markets to him, does not require him to yield up his arms at the border, nor refuses him permission to travel in safety, even with a border feud in certain proximity. This is all the more remarkable when the Montenegrin would be shot down within half an hour of crossing the frontier.

For fun I put the question why they allow their enemies to come thus armed into their country.

"Are we cowards?" comes the scornful answer.

"But is it politic to show, perhaps, thy weakness?"

"Vassović can put ten battalions in the field, and at a moment's notice," says my neighbor, "besides another twelve from the mountains round Berani. This they know; what need have we for secrecy?"

"To-morrow I leave at seven o'clock," says the Voivoda, rising. The Kommandir winks at me.

"I shall be ready myself, for I contemplate riding towards the frontier," I answer.

The Voivoda smiles as he wishes me good night. "Then thou must go well armed," he says, "for our borders now are dangerous."

We part with much laughter.

"Thy supper will be spoilt," says Stefan, my servant.

"What hast thou been doing this last hour?" I ask him as we walk across the broad street. He is in an unwontedly jovial humor.

"I have cleaned and oiled our rifles, Gospodin," he answers.

### Concerning a Conference.

The day promises to be hot. Even at this early hour the sun is making his presence felt in a decided manner. It is Sunday, and the women of Andrijevica, justly famed for their beauty, are looking prettier than ever in their best clothes.

I am just finishing my toilet, which would have been embarrassing to a stranger unused to the local ideas of privacy; for since Stefan threw back the shutters to intimate that it was time to rise, I have been watched by frankly curious faces. Of the four walls but one is blank, two face on the street, and the third is pierced by a window into the bakery, and by a glass door. The men I did not mind; but when my host fetched his pretty wife to see me manipulate my tooth-brush, I felt that modern civilization has its advantages. I expostulated with Stefan, who looked surprised, but chased away the men and boys.

"The women do not matter," he said, and disappeared to water the horses. The adjutant, more carefully attired than usual, beckons to me as I emerge upon the street.

"All ready?" he inquires, briskly. "We start in half an hour. Thy health, and may we have luck together."

A man has appeared with a tray, and the officer has helped himself to a glass of *slivovic*, tossing it off to his last remark. When the horses arrive I see the adjutant placing a formidable-looking bottle in his saddle-bag.

"Ammunition," he calls to me, patting it affectionately. Then comes the Voivoda, resplendent in his surcoat of creamy white and gold-slinged sword. We mount, and a few seconds later are clattering noisily out of Andrijevica, slumbering like a good-natured war-dog in the warm sunshine, past the little church, which should see us there to-day were it not for pressing business elsewhere. The *pop* (priest) is there, and waves us a God-speed, and a handsome, bearded man hurriedly greets me, for we are old friends—the insignia on his cap proclaims that he is a *kapetan*, his beard and long hair a priest. Then down the steep bank to the river Lim, hurrying with all speed to the mighty, far-away Danube. We splash through pools, taking short cuts across the shallow, winding stream, our dismounted escort trotting nimbly ahead, and keeping there in spite of *détours*.

Thus we clatter, splash, and jostle till the path climbs again the high bank and between the lofty hills enclosing us in a deep ravine, through shady damson-orchards (*slivo*), among fields of maize and vineyards, till the ravine shows signs of opening on to a great plain.

We are already skirting the frontier. The hills across the Lim are Albania, and a lonely tower on the last spur is a blockhouse of the Turks.

"How delightfully quiet and peaceful!" I remark to the adjutant. He smiles grimly.

"Three weeks ago it looked different," he answers, waving his hand towards the opposite bank of hills. "A few hundred Arnauts were firing then into this valley. Our men were up here to the left, and soon thou wilt see what *we* did as a hint to the Turks that they should keep better order in their land."

A bugle rings out crisply and suddenly—our escort close in, adjusting belts and bandoliers. We pass the bugler a minute later, a Turkish soldier, standing stiffly at the attention by the side of the path. Round the next bend the fertile plain of Berani unfolds before us, and a few hundred yards ahead is drawn up a compact little body of Turkish infantry.

"The border," says the adjutant, indicating a rude post, and canters up to the Voivoda. A group of Turkish officers

with little white hoods on their shoulders approaches us; we dismount, and a tall, clever-looking Turk salutes the Voivoda and shakes hands. I am presented: it is the Miralaji or military governor of Berani. His staff takes up position in line on the right flank of the guard of honor, who present arms, and I, following the Voivoda's example, shake hands with each. Then they join us, and we walk together towards an arbor. A merry little fellow addresses me in French, introducing himself as the army doctor, and arrived at the arbor, the Miralaji motions us to be seated on the divan running round the three sides. An orderly brings a low table and a big bottle. Cigarettes are presented, tiny glasses are filled from the aforesaid black bottle, and we are bidden welcome in—*slivovic*, though the Turks do not drink with us.

The ragged guard of honor marches back to the cluster of tents a little distance away, their slovenly appearance still more exaggerated by the mixture of red and white fezes in the ranks, while a disreputable-looking cut-throat mounts guard solemnly before the arbor. Then it is that I catch the eye of the adjutant, and, following its glance, I notice a blackened heap of ruins. So *that* is the hint which the men of Vassović gave to the Turks three weeks ago. It was the fortress; and a wall, still standing precariously, shows the loopholes. For an hour we sit and talk, sipping our *slivovic*, accepting cigarettes continually from our attentive hosts. Not a word of the business on hand is spoken, and the conversation is light, uninteresting, and formal. I am beginning to wonder how the difficult affairs of the border will be settled, when the Voivoda and Miralaji rise and go alone for a stroll towards the lonely hill which stands like a sentinel upon the plain. I see it, too, is crowned with a block-house.

The conference does not last long, but I walk across to the *han*, which is filled with our escort and a crowd of Montenegrins. At least I take them to be so, for their costume is the same—even the Prince's cipher is on their caps, and they are all armed; but the adjutant tells me they live across the border and are subject to the Turks.

"In name only," he adds; "for when fighting comes, they help us. It is useful," he continues naïvely, "for thus are the Turks surrounded. They are all of Vassović, and can muster 9,000 men. They it was who set fire to the fort."

"Are not the Turks annoyed?" I ask.

The adjutant shrugs his shoulders expressively. "What are they to do?" he queries. "They are not many, and we never commence the troubles."

The two chiefs return, calm and collected, as if their talk had been about the crops—which, in a sense, it has been—and then a squad of soldiers appear with dishes. Round a table we squat, a huge platter is put before us, wooden spoons and napkins are placed in our laps, and all fall to out of the common dish. Some help themselves with their fingers; but as we have all carefully had our hands washed, it is not so unpleasant as it would seem.

A few mouthfuls, and the platter is deftly whirled away. For the moment it annoys me, for its contents were good, and I am hungry; but a second later and another dish replaces it. After ten minutes I recline indolently; the remaining procession of courses have lost their interest. Ten or a dozen courses are served up within half an hour, the majority curious mixtures which defy description; but all delicate, well-cooked and appetizing. I gaze around that barren cluster of tents, but no sign can I see of a kitchen that could produce such a meal, which, after the frugality of the Montenegrin *cuisine*, was a feast fit for Lucullus.

Coffee and cigarettes follow, and then our attentive Tommies bring water to wash our hands. I do not return to the arbor, for the Voivoda and the Turk are arguing a knotty legal point, but I seek the shade of a hut, and there lay me down to ruminate on my strange surroundings. The little doctor follows me, also three Turkish officers, and we recline on blankets speedily requisitioned from the tents. Stefan, too, appears, and a brilliant thought strikes me.

"Go," I say, "to the Gospodin Adjutant's horse. In a saddle-bag thou wilt find——"

But Stefan has gone—at times he is intelligent—and reappears quickly with a bottle. The Turks shake their heads sadly, if not wistfully, for have they not watched us the whole morning tasting that seductive beverage? I fill a cup, glasses we have none, and present it to the doctor.

"The Miralaji cannot see," I say, softly, "and the law does *not* forbid it."

The doctor looks surprised. "You have been in Turkey," he answers, and with a deprecatory gesture tosses it off.

The ice is broken, and we spend a pleasant hour, during

which Stefan is busily employed. A clatter of sabers proclaims that the conference is over, and Stefan hurries off to the horses, bulging on one side.

"I thank thee for thy visit," says the Miralaji courteously. We bid an affectionate farewell, part more warmly still from my late companions, who look flushed, and then we canter past the guard of honor. A minute later and we are again on Montenegrin territory, and the adjutant is justly angered at finding thieves have been at his saddle-bags.

## Death.

Laughing and singing we had returned to-day on our way from the feast on the frontier towards Andrijevica. The generous sun heightened the beauty of the verdant hills, and it was easy to forget that the grim spectre of Death was hovering hungrily over those pleasant ridges.

We had ridden for more than an hour carelessly and lightheartedly, when a group of serious men suddenly appeared before us, standing immovably across the narrow path. They were evidently awaiting us, and the expression on their bronzed features checked jest and smile alike. The Voivoda dismounted at the first word, which I, being at the rear, did not hear, and entered a hut at the side of the path. The men trooped in after him and closed the door.

Death can make his presence felt, and as I waited in silence before that door I knew that he had claimed another victim, and slowly I too dismounted. I had not long to wait: the door opened again, and the burly form of the Voivoda pushed through. Behind him I saw a figure laid out upon the earthen floor, and then the adjutant beckoned me to enter. Cap in hand I obeyed his gesture, but, prepared as I was, my heart leapt with a sudden burst of anger.

A fair-haired boy lay stiffly at my feet, and no second glance was necessary to tell how he had met his death. His young body was riddled with bullets, the white serge tight-fitting suit only showing too plainly where each wound had sapped his life-blood. A typical shepherd-boy, with that rare beauty which perfect health gives to her favorites, such as the traveler can meet in hundreds on the rolling Montenegrin downs tending huge flocks of sheep—hearing him sing the war-songs of his country, full of life and spirits, breaking off at intervals to whistle shrilly to his charge. And such a boy had been

foully murdered—it could be nothing else with one so young—cut off, perhaps, in the midst of his song.

"To-morrow I meet thee here," I heard the Voivoda say to the peasant bearing the officer's crossed swords upon his cap. "Have fifty men to accompany me, and send word that I would speak with the chief of the Albanians who have done this deed."

Then were our horses brought, and slowly we rode away. Before we reached Andrijevica I had learnt the story of the foul deed. It was, alas! only too like many similar deeds that are perpetrated yearly on the wild borders. The boy had strayed with his flocks too near the frontier, and men—Turkish soldiers they were—had hailed him roughly, telling him to go back. And the boy, with the courage of generations of heroes, had answered that so long as he was on his father's land he would go back for no one. Then shots rang out, and the boy fell, hit in seven places by cowardly bullets; Albanians came and drove away the flocks: such was the sad story which another shepherd-boy had brought to the indignant clansmen who had fetched the poor corpse away. But Death had laid his icy hand on yet another victim. Ere we had ridden another hour, came a man to us with the report of a suicide. In a tiny house, nestling up the hillside in a cluster of vines, lay a woman, gasping out her life with a self-inflicted revolver-bullet in her body. Even as we reach the house she has yielded up the ghost, maddened to the deed because she thought an incurable disease possessed her.

I have written here my own impressions: neither death affected the sturdy clansmen one whit beyond a longing for a speedy revenge in the former case. The grisly reaper has no terrors for the men of Vassović; even the father of the boy was self-contained—nay, even proud that his son had shown a brave front to those dogs of Turks. They are fatalists one and all. "We must all die once, and a bullet is quickest, and is an honorable death." So speak the border clansmen, and thus have spoken their fathers and their fathers' fathers, counting death upon a sick-bed as unworthy of a man.

I have watched the Voivoda. There is a certain grimness in the set of his jaw, but he utters no word of his plans for the morrow. He is as good-natured as ever, and accepts with alacrity an invitation to dine with me in the evening. The

meal was as boisterous as any eaten by jovial, careless men, and when my guests depart the night is well advanced.

Confused by the events of the day, heated by the potent libations, I stroll out upon the moonlit street to smoke a last cigarette. There is such an air of calm and peace upon the scene that I pass my hand wonderingly over my brow. A youth is standing in the shadow of a house telling a maiden the old, old story. She has evidently slipped out to this nocturnal rendezvous by stealth. As I approach she makes as if to fly, but the youth stays her, and he wishes the Gospodin Englishman good-night with an unaffected laugh.

From the bed of the river I see a group of men, perhaps a dozen in all, swinging up towards the town All have rifles, and their white garb looks ghostly in the moonshine. They come in silence, too, and swiftly. As they draw nearer I see that some are carrying a burden on their shoulders. With a little cry the girl hides behind the house, and with noiseless tread the men march by. The lover has joined me, and he doffs his cap, crossing himself mechanically.

The burden is a dead man upon a stretcher. The moon shines down on his ghastly features, and shows a great dark patch upon the canvas.

In utter silence the men stride on—we do not greet in that presence—and in another minute have turned a corner.

"That is the second in two days," says the youth; "to-morrow we shall repay."

From behind the house the girl steals back shyly, and I leave them to continue their sweet love-making undisturbed by that grim procession. Yet to-morrow it may be the fate of the youth, who has already forgotten that there is a to-morrow. I return to the main street. It is quite deserted save for the gendarme, who is patrolling thoughtfully and slowly, rifle upon his shoulder and cigarette between his lips.

"We have but a few hours' sleep," says Stefan, as he pulls off my boots. "At dawn we must creep out of the town before the Voivoda, else he may stop us. A guide will meet us at the ford. I have filled thy bandolier."

Five minutes later and Stefan is snoring loudly. Sleep does not come so easily to me to-night, but when it does, I dream of that ghostly procession which passes noiselessly and swiftly and in silence, bearing in its midst a man with upturned face towards the gentle moon.

REVENGE.

All was still this morning at dawn when we stole out of Andrijevica. The night gendarme was the only person we met, and he winked appreciatively as we walked our horses down the street. Now we are resting beside the noisy Lim, our horses grazing contentedly on the rich grass, and Stefan produces from his capacious breeches-pocket a bottle of fresh milk. Our *protenes* munched—what a godsend those biscuits proved at times!—we have lit cigarettes, and Stefan is lazily throwing pebbles into the stream. A little way up the hillside is a mutilated house. Its appearance is so weird that I stroll towards it. A man is performing very perfunctory ablutions before the door, washing with a tiny ladle of water the heavy sleep from his eyes.

"God protect thee!" I call, and he, shaking the drops from his face, bids me welcome. His house is literally cut in half as with a giant knife. Seeing my inquiring gaze, his frank face clouds in anger.

"Who has done this thing?" I ask.

"My brother—God curse him!" answers the man, gruffly.

"Tell me," I continued; "and if thou hast a cup of coffee ready, I will drink it."

The surly look vanishes for one of pleasure. The true mountaineer delights in hospitality. and he leads me into the half-ruined cottage, to the common living-room, which is roughly fenced with logs at its mutilated end. A woman rises to kiss my hand, and deftly prepares my coffee, while her husband helps himself to a pinch of tobacco from my tin.

"Thou knowest the law that when a man dies his goods are equally divided between his sons?" he begins, abruptly. I nod. "This was the house of my father, and when he died my brother and I were his sole inheritors. Now, my brother coveted this house for his own, but I, as the elder, have the right to live in it, and I did make him a fair offer in money and in cattle instead of the half of the house. This he would not take, even though the *kapetan* adjudged the value of his half, and I was willing to pay. He is a wicked man, and had hated me, his own brother, for years. His half he would have, and nothing else, and as I would not suffer him to live with me, he came one day when I was absent and cut the house even as thou seest it, burning in a huge fire that which was legally his."

"Hast thou no redress?" I ask.

"None," he answers, gloomily. "It was his and he took it, but some day . . ." and he pauses significantly.

I am glad when Stefan comes for me with the news that our guide has come, and that we should be moving. I bid farewell, and go forth from the outraged brother's house with feelings of relief. The company of a peasant with a grievance is in no land to be desired. The guide salutes smartly, but he is not alone. A gendarme has accompanied him. I know him —he is one of the Voivoda's most trusted men.

"Art sent to bring me back?" I ask, sharply.

"Nay, Gospodin," he answers, his face wreathed in smiles; "but I am sent that thou mayest witness all in safety and from a good point of vantage. This, though is only for *thy* ear."

I mentally thank the good-nature of the Voivoda, and we start upon our journey. We strike obliquely across the hills, and in an hour we see a small body of men marching loosely along the valley at our feet. There are mounted men among them, in whom I recognize the Voivoda and his adjutant. At the neck of the valley we await them.

The Voivoda canters ahead to meet me with a cheery "Good morning." He checks my thanks, for, as he says, it may only be a talk. "We are very few," he remarks, with a glance at the little body of men, who now halt around us, leaning upon their rifles, "and they will be there perhaps in thousands."

"Is it wise to face so many with so small a force?" I hazard, but the Voivoda smiles craftily.

"They are enough," he says. "I know each man from childhood; besides, a larger force would only precipitate matters." Again that smile steals over his rugged face, and I am perplexed.

"May I ride with thee?" I ask, smothering my inquisitiveness, and he nods.

"Thou art now under my command," he says, laughing, and makes his old joke again of an Anglo-Montenegrin alliance.

At a curt order a score of men detach themselves, and, at a long, swinging double, disappear up the wooded slopes. There are but thirty men left with us, and these, I notice, glance often at their loaded magazines. A subdued eagerness shows itself in every face, and I feel my heart beating faster as I unsling my carbine.

We halt at the edge of a wood, and at our feet stretches a small plain. Under its cover we dismount, and another glance shows me that of our remaining thirty men, now but the half are there. No orders are given; each man has obviously received his instructions hours ago. Beyond the plain is a scattered forest, and with my field glasses I fancy I can detect white-clad figures moving restlessly among the trees. The Voivoda moves at length from the sheltering wood, and I would follow, when the gendarme touches my arm.

"Thou art to stop with me, Gospodin," he says, and noticing my half-angered look, he adds, "Thou wilt see everything. Look! but a dozen men go with the Voivoda; the rest are here."

A stone projects from the slope, which falls away from the wood, and upon it stands the Voivoda. His orderly gives a long hail, which echoes across the valley, and then the little group waits in silence. An answer soon comes, but, unpractised in the art of long-distance talking, I can distinguish no word. It is the beginning of the conference, for, as my guide informs me, it was at this place that the shepherd-boy was murdered. He points me out the blockhouse, from which I now see soldiers emerging, and little by little hundreds of Albanians come out fearlessly into the open.

It is a wonderful sight. To the right and left almost precipitous mountains form a neck of the intervening plain, making an ideal spot to combat a treacherous flank-attack if such should be planned. The Voivoda uses his orderly as a mouthpiece, and he is answered by a knot of men some 500 yards away. Nearer they do not come.

"What says the Voivoda?" I ask, impatiently.

"He is demanding that the sheep be returned, and that the men who shot the boy should be given him. They answer that they knew not who has stolen the sheep, the liars, and that the Nizams (Turkish regulars) fired, not they. It is not true, for we found three Martini bullets in the body. Listen; the Voivoda is saying so. Now they answer that one of their clan was shot three days ago, and it was the revenge for him. Ah! now they are insolent. They know but fifty men are with us, for their spies have watched us, doubtless, all the way."

"But what do they say?" again I demanded.

"I am listening, Gospodin; but such long talking is slow.

Ah, but they shall repent these words. They answer that so will all Montenegrins be treated who graze their sheep on the border pasturages. See, the Voivoda is angry!"

"Then we will teach ye a lesson," I myself hear, and the Voivoda turns to retrace his steps.

A puff of smoke in the distance, and one of the Montenegrins near the Voivoda falls heavily to the ground. He is picked up by his comrades, and, without hurrying his step, the Voivoda raises his hand. Rifles crackle all around me, and in another second the Voivoda has reached the wood, the bullets chipping the branches in a perfect hail around him. My gendarme pulls me down behind a rock. Our arrangements are perfect—the fifty men are spread at intervals throughout the length of the wood, and the superiority of their magazine fire over the breech-loaders of the Albanians is quickly apparent.

"Watch the Nizams," shouts the gendarme. He, too, is firing.

They are scuttling like rabbits to their blockhouse. Three fall before they reach it, and as I hastily sweep the ground with my glasses, I see many figures, some motionless, others writhing on the grass. It is over in a few minutes, and not a soul is to be seen, though a rattle of rifle-fire comes from the opposite wood.

"It is good," says my guard, snapping the lock of his rifle preparatory to reloading the magazine. "They have paid tenfold. Let us now go, and quickly. Yes, it is all finished. Listen, our men fire no more. Why should *we* waste good cartridges on trees? Come; it is the Voivoda's order."

And hurriedly we retrace our steps to the horses, which Stefan is holding, blind rage upon his face that he should have been debarred from the fight. We mount and ride as quickly as our guide can trot, which is a good pace. A quarter of an hour later and we charge into the arms of the adjutant, and to the right and left stand hundreds of Montenegrins. I look surprised.

"My battalion," laughs the adjutant, "in case they follow, which they will not do, if I know the cowardly rascals."

Now, an Albanian is not cowardly; but I let that pass, for I know the clan we have just fought. They are the Clementi, and once I spent a happy time in their midst—but that is another story.

Then the men of the ambuscade double in, looking extremely happy, and lastly the Voivoda. He greets me with a brisk nod, and asks me if I am satisfied.

"So, I hope, are the Albanians," I say, and the answer calls forth a hoarse chorus of laughter.

"Now let us get back to dinner," remarks the Voivoda. "I love not such early hours as we have kept this morning. And yesterday was a heavy day for one of my years."

The waiting battalion salutes us as we pass through their ranks, and the adjutant bids me *au revoir*.

"Thou didst know that the Albanians would only come out if thy party was so small?" I query.

"Yes," he answers; "thou seest now why we do not fear spies."

"And the battalion followed us in the rear?"

"Exactly," answers the Voivoda, lighting a cigarette.

I ponder much on the wiles of the guileless Montenegrin as I somewhat thoughtfully ride by his side.

# As Seen from the Background: The Story of an Anxious Mother, by L. H. Hammond. Illustrations by Bessie Collins Pease*

THE Fond Parent sat in a low rocking-chair, darning stockings. The havoc wrought by the knees and toes of three stout boys was sufficient to engage her most serious attention; but her needle slid in and out automatically, and what she saw was not the fast-filling chasm through which her plump fingers yet shone, but the face of the Football Youth, with its setting of bushy hair, its cerulean eyes, and the bit of down which was to the eye of faith an incipient mustache.

He had come to college a raw freshman only the year before, and he lived with his aunt across the way. At the time of his arrival the Lily Maid wore a pigtail and abbreviated skirts,

*Written for Short Stories.

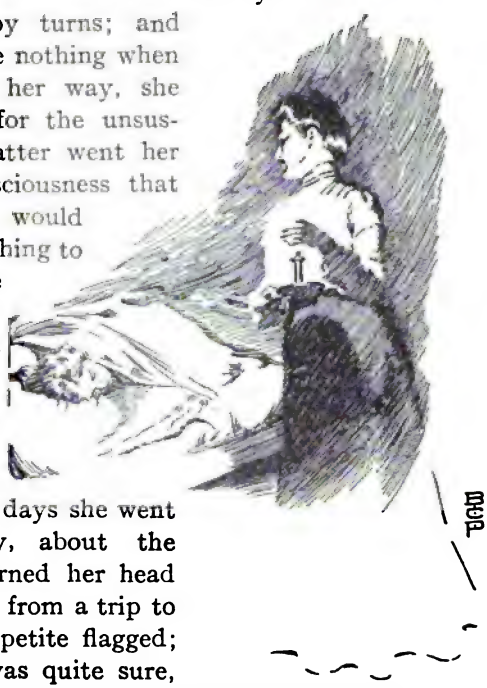
and her indifference to the admiring glances of the college youths was to the Fond Parent's eye a beautiful and touching thing. Unfortunately, it was not destined to last. But the Lily Maid was a gentlewoman, and if, during that magic year, as her skirts descended and her pigtail aspired, she began to notice the ripple of pleasurable interest which her morning walk past the college campus invariably occasioned, she gave no sign, but went calmly on, as usual, to the door of the Select Seminary for Young Ladies, of which institution she was the acknowledged ornament and pride.

It was late in the spring before the Football Youth mustered courage to call with his aunt. The Lily Maid was, by that time, a creature not to be resisted. She had made several of her summer gowns herself, and if the Fond Parent rather disapproved of the little train, she was too proud of the young dressmaker's skill to say so; the pigtail had also finished its journey, and rested on the little head in a fluffy golden heap. Outwardly, the Lily Maid was a young lady. Inwardly, she was a very shy little girl; and when the Football Youth's visit was ended, and she cuddled down in the Fond Parent's capacious lap for one of their frequent private chats, she plainly intimated that she thought the young man a bore; and that her own three brothers were really the only enjoyable boys in town—a sentiment which the Fond Parent frankly shared.

It had developed that the Football Youth was an orphan, and he naturally spent the summer with his aunt, so much of the summer, that is to say, as he did not spend on the Fond Parent's veranda with the Lily Maid. The Fond Parent watched him sharply enough, and was forced to admit to herself that he seemed really quite a nice child. In a moment of indiscretion she presented this opinion of him to the Lily Maid, and was pained to receive the information, enthusiastically given, that he was a sophomore in college, that he was head "man" on the college team, and that he would be twenty years old on the seventeenth of next April. This was not long before college re-opened, and the Lily Maid entered upon her senior year at the Young Ladies' Select Seminary. Next year she was to go to the Woman's College at Lynchburg; and the Fond Parent now regarded those halls of learning as a haven of refuge, provided the child could be landed there with her heart intact.

But trouble was evidently brewing. She was blossoming

out in a really miraculous way, while the Football Youth was positively radiant, even to the prongs of his auburn hair. When, in their confidential chats, the Fond Parent carelessly introduced his name, the Lily Maid fell suddenly silent, and atoned for her reticence with impassioned squeezes, which took the Fond Parent's breath in more senses than one. But that sagacious lady, troubled though she was, knew better than to snatch at an unripe confidence, which was sure to drop into her hand at last; so she watched with keen eyes which were amused and anxious by turns; and though she seemed to see nothing when the Lily Maid looked her way, she spread so many snares for the unsuspecting child, that the latter went her way with a happy consciousness that when the time came, it would not be at all a difficult thing to pour her tale into the Fond Parent's ear.



It came about, however, as such things usually do, in quite an unsuspected way. A sudden change came over the Lily Maid. For several days she went quietly, almost silently, about the house; she no longer turned her head when the maid returned from a trip to the front door; her appetite flagged; and the Fond Parent was quite sure, more than once, when she went as usual to the child's bedside at night, to see that she was comfortably tucked in, that the Lily Maid was wide awake, though she lay quite still with closed eyes, and gave no sign that she felt the good-night kiss, when it softly touched her cheek in the accustomed place. The situation was clear, even luminous, without the added fact that the Football Youth had disappeared from the Fond Parent's horizon.

Having successfully diagnosed the case, the next step was to apply the remedy. It was clearly providential that just at this juncture a belated circus came to town; the three boys, promptly shipped to the scene of action in the care of a big

cousin, were safe until late bedtime; and the Fond Parent, affectionate and artless, turned off the electric light that the two might enjoy the first firelight chat of the season.

It was a delicate operation, but it was performed with the skill of a master, and the Lily Maid, who had been positive that her heart was crushed for life, was amazed to realize that the mangled organ, as its weight of woe was rolled on the Fond Parent's ample bosom, was rapidly returning to something like its normal shape. In fact, there remained but one wound which threatened serious consequences, and that was the injury to the Lily Maid's self-respect. It was not so horrible, after all, that they should have quarrelled; red-headed people were almost always high-tempered; and she frankly admitted that his hair was red, though hitherto she had spoken of it as auburn; and, of course, if a person chose to go with other girls—with another girl—and send her flowers, and lend her his society pin, a person would scorn to care, declared the Lily Maid, with a little tremor in her voice; but there was something else, she added with a gasp, burying her nose in the Fond Parent's neck gear, and squeezing her very hard. She had given him a lock of her hair—when he kept on begging; and when she gave it to him he had kissed her hand, and he must have thought she cared, because she didn't get mad, and she had cared, she had cared, and he knew it, and he didn't care at all! She wished she was dead. She would never get over it. And she knew that it was the other girl he had liked all the time. She wouldn't mind it so much if he had cared, but now she was disgraced; she could never look anybody in the face again.

The Fond Parent held her very close and spoke almost in a whisper. She remembered her father, did she not? she asked the Lily Maid. The latter raised her head suddenly, for even now her mother spoke of him only with an effort, and under pressing need. She felt a sudden sense of dignity, of intimacy, of sharing her mother's confidence, not as a child, but as a woman. The Football Youth seemed suddenly of small con sequence. She remembered her father perfectly, and the memory was full of pride and joy. It had been impossible for the Football Youth to make any very rapid headway with her until she had persuaded herself that he would become, in time, very much such a man as her father had been. Just now this idea appeared absurd. But her mother was speaking again.

Her father had loved a woman many years—that was before she knew him. He had loved the woman deeply, but when, at last, they were about to be married, she had jilted him, and given her hand to a mere boy, younger than herself, whose prospect of wealth seemed greater than her father's. Would she lose respect for her father now, because he had cared so

much, and given his love where it was neither appreciated nor returned? The Lily Maid's gray eyes flashed. Her mother pressed her head gently down on her shoulder again and went on. It was a terrible thing for her father; it was years before he had cared for another woman—for her; but this that had come to her little girl was just a breath of the future, a faint prophecy of the time when her heart should awaken, not for a boy, but for a man. It was just that the time had come for her to stir in her sleep; anyone else would have done as well as the Football Youth. It would soon pass.

The eyes of the Lily Maid, as she kissed her mother, were not altogether incredulous, and in the days that followed she brightened visibly. It was easy to talk now; and if she felt again the chills and fever of despondency, she knew where to go for help. The Fond Parent attended her convalescence with a light heart, thankful for the mild attack, and hopeful that her treasure was now immune. As a reward for good conduct, and also as a precaution against the evil effects of idleness, she sent her to visit relatives in Washington during the Christmas holidays, and smiled over her own astuteness when she noticed the Football Youth lounging slowly by the house next day, and watching the front door with a furtive air. He repeated the performance for a day or two, and after that she saw him no more until college re-opened, when he marched by with his head erect, and with quite the air of a man of the world.

The holidays were prolonged for the Lily Maid. Three days before they should have ended, the solitary boarding pupil who remained at the seminary through the Christmas season developed a case of scarlet fever, which almost threw the little town in a panic; and it was nearly February before the afflicted principal could open the school doors. The Fond Parent, glad for her child to escape the contagion either of scarlet fever or of heart affection, prolonged her leave of absence, the more cheerfully, as the child seemed in the gayest of spirits, as far removed from the temper of a pining lover as could well be imagined. But they had never before been separated for so long; and it was with a full heart that she at last welcomed her little daughter, whose bright face showed at a glance that no concealed grief had been preying upon her damask cheek.

They went upstairs together to the delightful task of unpacking the Lily Maid's trunk and discussing at length the additions to her wardrobe which she had made at the Nation's capital. Personal matters thus disposed of, they seated themselves upon the wardrobe couch, while the Fond Parent entered into a searching inquiry regarding the styles displayed in the shops, and the tendency of the times in the matter of skirts. There was something else in which she was even more interested, and it must bide its proper time. The time came when she put her arm about the Lily Maid, and that small person, snuggling against her side, dropped her golden head

upon her mother's shoulder and began, in a shy little voice, to tell her tale.

When the Football Youth had followed her to Washington —the Fond Parent gave thanks that she had no nerves and never started, she had been just a little glad at first; but after anybody knows a man—a real man, who has read, and knows everything, and has had adventures in all sorts of queer countries—the Fond Parent took a sudden twist in her mental consciousness with a view to holding herself steady—why, a boy like that is so raw. And besides, they never have any sense, and are forever in the way. And, of course, she went on, hesitating a little, if people will be foolish, and insist on saying things nobody wants them to say—and besides, it couldn't possibly make any difference to her what girl he went with; as if she could be jealous about a boy! And he had called her a flirt, and had been horrid in every way; and she hadn't done any such thing; and when other people were so good-tempered, and so cultivated, and so interesting, it wasn't her fault if the Football Youth bored her. He was so young.

The Fond Parent sat blinking at the new wall paper which adorned the Lily Maid's room, wondering if she were really awake. She looked down at the pretty head and touched the fluffy hair softly with her lips, while she encouraged the child, by various sympathetic squeezes, to go on; but she was not listening at all. She was wondering if it were always to be out of deep water into deeper; if the little feet that she had guided so long, instead of coming back to her side again, were beginning to stray still further afield. She had known they must walk their path some day, but it had never occurred to her that the Football Youth stood at the parting of the ways, and that, though the child might walk near at hand for many a mile yet, she would never return to the security of the path which she had left.

The Lily Maid was beginning to wonder a little at her silence when the smallest boy burst into the room with joy on his youthful countenance. Did his mother ever see such bully apples?—well, splendid apples, then—the man didn't have but three bushels left, and that pig of a Tom Walker was just sprinting down the street to get his mother to buy the whole lot! The Lily Maid stretched out her hand for one of the samples, and set her small teeth in it with evident interest and pleasure. As the Fond Parent opened her pocketbook,

brother and sister caught sight of a flying figure almost at the corner of the street. They sprang to the window, by a common impulse, and engaged two-thirds of the countryman's stock, just as the panting Thomas threw himself upon the tail-board of the wagon, and gasped out that his mother would take the three bushels. The light of victory gleamed in the eyes of the two at the window, and they scurried downstairs, hand in hand, to secure their prize, while the Fond Parent, stepping down slowly, as became her years and dignity, assured herself with a smile that the Lily Maid had come home in time, and was in no immediate danger.

# Ma Mie: A Burmese Sketch, by Henry Fielding*

IT is a mistake, I am sure, ever to revisit places where you have lived, to see again scenes where you have been happy.

The desire to do so is a false desire, it is a desire born of the past, not of the present; it is, if we analyze it, a desire to recall the place and the people as they were then. We forget that they must have all changed; that the children have grown up, the boys have become men, the maidens are wives and mothers. We forget that death may have come among the older people. We imagine we shall find all as we left it, and that we ourselves shall be as when we were there; but when our desire is realized we find, alas, that we are strangers among strangers in a strange place, that is only the more strange because of its familiarity. Yes, it is a mistake.

Seven years ago I lived in a village up against the Shan Hills, the pleasantest village and the pleasantest people that I have known in Burma, and I sought the chance and revisited it the other day.

We sat near the well, the police officer and I, just as we used to sit seven years ago, only the police officer was not the same. We sat and watched the sun set afar off in a golden glory over the low hills and the gray shadows steal out of the hollows and claim the fields as theirs, just as they used to do. The monastery gongs rang for sunset near by and the yellow-robed monks passed beneath their trees as they had done long ago. The girls came running down the village to the well with their water-jars. They laughed as they ran and chattered at the well while they drew the water, and their voices with the plash of the water came to us softly on the still air.

*From Temple Bar.

I used to know all the girls who came there. They used to laugh to me as they went, and call out little messages and questions. They are all changed now. The girls I knew are married, are wives, are mothers; they have left the village with their husbands, or stay soberly at home. I asked after them all—Ma Lan, Ma So Me, Ma Pwa, and many others—but my companion knew but few of them. It was depressing to hear him say—"Ah yes, she has been married; she is quite plain now, and has three children"; or "She has left the village with her husband, and was divorced subsequently"; or "She is dead."

And so we sat in silence, watching the sun leave even the low summits of the hills and the tops of the palm trees, and shed his last glory on the heavens above us. The cattle came trailing past in lazy strings, driven by little naked boys, and a light dust hung in the air behind them.

Then in the luminous dusk came a girl down the village path alone, passing close to where we were. She was very young, only fourteen or so, tall and slight, with half-developed form, and she walked with a grace such as Burmese girls do not have. Her face was very fair, promising to be beautiful, and she wore a red rose in her hair. Her dress was the usual Burmese dress, a scarlet skirt with a white jacket, and a necklace of pearls about her neck; but there appeared to be in her something which other Burmese girls have not. She seemed strange, not quite in keeping with the place, and the people about her—a foreign note struck in this very Burmese place.

I watched her curiously as she went down the path. There were other girls still at the well, and she joined them and talked with them. Seen a little way off, she appeared older than she was, a woman grown, and all at once it seemed as if I had a remembrance of her, as if I had seen her before, and she belonged to that past as none of the other girls there did. I tried to remember, but could not.

"Do you know who that child is?" I asked my companion.

"The one who passed just now?" he queried.

"Yes, the slight girl with the red rose in her hair."

"I believe," he answered, carelessly, "that her name is Ma Mie; her father is a carpenter, I think."

Yes, the name Ma Mie was familiar, too. I tried to remember, but I could not. The clue would not come.

"Perhaps she was a pet of yours when you were here?" suggested my friend.

Well, she might have been. I am fond of children. But the remembrance seemed to be of something more than this.

"Let us stroll down the path and meet her coming up," I said. He rose from where we had been sitting, and went on down the path. The dark was coming fast, and the group at the well was thinning. The girls passed us by twos and threes, looking curiously at me, smiling at my companion; last came the girl.

"Ma Mie?" I said to her, "you are Ma Mie?"

The girl stopped and looked at me timidly; "*Thakin!*" she replied.

"Do you not remember me?" I asked. "I used to live here seven years ago, when you were a small child."

The girl looked at me intently for a few minutes. Then she made a sign of dissent. "No, *Thakin*, I do not remember."

I nodded and passed on. As I had looked closely at her the remembrance came more clearly than ever. It was not that I had known her, but that she was connected with something that had happened, something very strange. My memory began to stir and quicken.

"You say," I asked my companion, "that her father is a carpenter?"

"Yes; Maung Laung," he answered. "He lives up near the fig-tree in the center of the village. But now you speak of her," he added, reflecting, "I think I have heard she is not his own daughter, but adopted. I believe her mother was a native of India, and got killed somehow."

"Yes, of course," I exclaimed; like a flash I had remembered. "Of course. Poor child! What a terrible experience that was. I dream of it now when I have bad nights. It was I who gave her to Maung Laung to be adopted afterward."

"What was it?" asked my companion in surprise.

"Have you never heard of it? Of the woman and the sepoy Abdul Khan, and the little house near the rest-house and what happened there?"

"I should have thought in a village like this it would never be forgotten."

But I found that my companion had never heard, and so that night after dinner, when we sat in long chairs on the open

grass before the house and enjoyed the cool, fresh breeze that the night gave us, I told him the story.

Forest and I were the only two Englishmen there then. I was the magistrate and he was police officer. We lived in tiny little houses close to each other, and we breakfasted and dined together always. But we were young, the dacoit days were not yet over, and time did not hang upon our hands.

Forest and I used to go down to the well in the evening and sit there and talk to the girls who came for water. We knew them all by name and sight. They were not shy when once they found out that you did not mean to hurt them or be rude to them.

Nearly all of them were girls unmarried, waiting for a husband, but one or two married women came down, too, those who were too poor to hire a water-carrier or had no daughters to send. Among these last was the mother of the child we saw this evening.

She was a very handsome woman, handsome yet, though past the age at which these women usually begin to fade. She was not a Burmese, but a woman from Northern India, very fair, so fair that in the dusk she was almost white, and with a beautiful figure and carriage. She looked very charming as she came down the path to the well in the glow of the dying day, her little girl paddling by her side with one tiny hand firmly grasping her mother's skirts. Being a native of India, she was shy with men as Burmese girls are not, and, beyond a courteous salutation, she would not talk; but I soon found out all about her from the other girls.

She had come over from India with her husband when she was quite a child. Her husband had been in Burma before, and had established a small trade between Upper Burma and the Shan States, taking up cotton goods, mirrors, and such things on mules, and bringing back tea and silver. They had been married as children, and as soon as the man's trade was on a fairly good footing, he went over to India and brought her back with him.

That was in the King's time, six years before the war.

For a time their trade prospered. The roads were fairly quiet in those days, and the profits of trade were large, so that, before long, they were able to invest their spare savings in some land and palm trees in the village which they made

their base. They built a house here, and about three years before the war their little girl was born.

After that the woman did not accompany her husband very frequently on his trips to the mountains. She remained at home and looked after her little daughter and the land and trees. Her husband made usually two trips a year, and spent a month between each trip at home.

Then the war broke out. Everyone remembers what happened then; how, after we occupied Mandalay, the weak remains of the Burmese Government were swept away in a tide of furious insurrection. Law and order disappeared, and there was chaos. The roads were infested with brigands, and no one was safe. The woman's husband was shot by them one misty morning as his caravan was going through the passes. Fortunately there remained to her the land and the house and the daughter. She did not think of returning to India. Her friends were in the village where she lived. After her husband's death she put on Burmese dress and made her daughter do the same. They lived as Burmans do, they offered gifts to the monks and to the pagoda, they joined in the festivals with the villagers, and were accepted as of them.

It was four years after the war that I came to the village.

I had been hard-worked on the frontier, and was sent there for a rest. It was a pleasant little place; not very much to do, a certain amount of office-work, some cases to try, and now and then a chase after the last gang of Dacoits who were left.

There were no troops within twenty miles of us, but we had a hundred military police in a small fort near the court-house.

These were men enlisted in Upper India, and formed into battalions, one for each district. They relieved the troops of all outpost duty, treasure and prison guard, and the work of hunting robbers. Each battalion had ten European officers, but these lived at the district headquarters, and the outposts were commanded by a native officer, a subadar, or a jemadar, who had been in some native regiment. They were usually quiet and well-behaved, having but little to do with the Burmese among whom they lived.

Two or three months after my arrival at the village I began to miss the woman from the well in the evening. I had liked

to see her, and I was afraid that she might be ill, and so I inquired of some of the girls there. They laughed when I asked.

"She is married," they said.

"Married!" I asked, "to whom?"

To a sepoy of the Indian police, they told me. And he was jealous of her, as Indians are, and did not like her to go abroad much or come to the well in the evening. So she stopped at home. Sometimes the little girl came with a neighbor, carrying on her head a tiny pot for water, but the mother never. It was very natural, I thought, that the woman should marry again, and not seeing her, I soon forgot all about her.

It is strange, here in the East, how events grow and grow all about us, and we, the European rulers of the country, know nothing; of the gathering clouds we see nothing, of the roaring thunder we hear nothing. The tempest brews unknown to us, and it is only when it bursts that we understand. For we are outside the people, and not of them.

So of all that happened after the woman ceased to come to the well I heard nothing, suspected nothing at all. Life went on as usual until the end.

It was the hot weather then. The earth was baked and dry and very dusty. The hills were hid in haze that quivered under the fierce sun that beat and beat all day with never a rest.

The air was dry, and everything was hot; to touch one's stirrup-irons after a ride was to scorch one's finger.

And the nights were worse, far worse, than the days. In the days you have work to do, you can forget, but in the night you cannot do so. Through the sultry hours of the early night you lie awake upon your bed and suffer. You cannot sleep. The air is as the air of a furnace, the sheets are hot like iron sheets, the pillows suffocate you as they press your cheek. It is not till long past midnight that the air cools a little and you can doze with a restless, wearying sleep for an hour or two till the hot dawn comes.

I heard in my sleep a shot, and then another. They hardly woke me, arousing just enough consciousness to make me feel a petulant anger against the disturber of my rest. I turned to try again, and there came another shot, and another, and

behind them sounded a murmur of voices, a shouting dimly heard afar off as in a dream.

It annoyed me, and I opened my eyes drowsily to see the first red finger of the dawn pointing across my room. I thought it was someone shooting green pigeons in the fig-tree near the court, and I cursed him for getting up so early.

But the shouting became clearer; it was a turmoil, a yell from many men, growing louder, and I sat up to wonder what it was.

In a moment my door was thrown open and my syce, a Sikh, came running in. "Sahib, it is a sepoy running amuck. He is coming past here. Do not go out."

In a moment I was on my feet. Our revolvers were never far away from our hands. "Let me get out," I said. But the Sikh pushed me back, and a shot came through the roof of my house. It was but a thatched roof, and the walls but of matting. I ran to the window and looked out.

Just beside my house was a road leading into the village. A man was running down it. He was a sepoy in uniform with rifle and cartridge-belt. He was alone. At the corner of the lane he suddenly stopped and turned. His rifle sprang to his shoulder and he fired straight up the lane past my window, not at me. I wondered whom he fired at, and looked up to see, but no one could be seen. Then he turned and ran on, disappearing round the corner, pushing in a new cartridge as he went. A moment later the jemadar and some sepoys appeared.

The danger for the moment was over, and my Sikh was holding the door open. "Only be careful, sahib," he said, "for the man is mad."

Outside I met Forest, the police officer, running with his rifle towards the village, and he called to me.

"Abdul Khan has shot the Havildar dead," he cried. "Come on!" So we ran on side by side into the village.

It is not pleasant to be waked from one's sleep by murder and outrage. It is not pleasant to have to pursue the murderer with your eyes still blinking with slumber, your head still too stupid to take in the bearings of what has happened, your system yearning for a cup of tea.

We went cautiously. When the wood was clear and straight we ran. When we came to a turn we went round slowly, with

much spying. The lanes were empty, for it was yet very early in the morning and the sun was just rising. Early workers were coming out in front of their houses, but the rest of the village was as yet asleep.

To one or two of these early risers we called to ask where the sepoy had gone, but they did not know. The lanes here in the center of the village branched into several, and we could not tell which way he had passed. Near the big fig-tree we halted a moment to consider, and we heard a cry and a shot. "Sahib," cried the jemadar, who was behind us, "that is his wife; he has killed her."

Then we set off running again, for we knew who his wife was—the woman I have spoken of—and we knew where she lived. It was a little house, surrounded by a yard fenced by a broken fence, near the center of the village. In a moment we were round the corner, and it was in front of us. A bullet whistling past our ears drove us to cover at once.

There were several carts there near the house, and Burmese carts have solid wheels. They are three or four inches thick, of very solid timber, and afford a good protection.

Forest and I were behind a cart-wheel, and we saw the sepoys who had followed us take shelter round about. One was behind a log, another under a house, a third sheltered by a tree. A second bullet from the house hastened the movements of those who were still exposed.

There was the little house before us. It was about twenty feet square, of bamboo, thatched and raised some two feet from the ground. Windows there seemed to be none, and the door was shut.

Forest and I sat behind the cart-wheel to consider. We had got the man fast enough. He was in the house. What was to be done? It seemed easy enough at first thought. The house was not bullet-proof; we could fire volleys into it till the murderer was dead.

But then we became suddenly aware of a sound issuing from the house. It was a terrible sound, a woman groaning. It made one's blood run cold to hear it. It was a moan rising into a shriek, and then choked. Now and then we could hear a word, "He has shot me," she said. We shivered to hear it. Forest almost leaped to his feet, but a bullet from the house just missed him, and I pulled him down again.

"Sahib," said the jemadar, "have a care. His bandolier is full of cartridges."

Think of us there! Before us in the house was the murderer. He was fully armed. He was quite desperate, knowing his life was forfeit. To break into the house would take some minutes—enough for him to shoot us all dead at close range if he tried, and him we could not shoot. For we could not tell in that house where he stood and where the woman. If we fired blindly we were as likely to hit her as to hit him. We stared at each other in blank dismay.

A man often wonders what he will do if he is suddenly called on in an emergency. No one can tell till he is tried. But dilemmas such as we were in happen seldom. A fight is a fight. There could be no fight here. We could go up and be shot, but what would be the use of that?

So we sat there and looked at each other. More and more sepoys came and sought shelter all around us. The woman's cries from the house had ceased, and no more shots came from there. We supposed that the woman was dead, and that the man was reserving his ammunition for us. But still we were not sure she was dead, so we dared not fire.

The sun rose higher and it became very hot. Forest and I had come out as we had jumped from our beds. We had no hats and no shoes. Our dress was only our night pyjamas. The sun beating on our heads made us feel ill, and our mouths were very parched and dry.

Then a curious thing happened. Walking calmly down the lane straight toward us came our two Burmese servants. They looked neither to right nor left, but walked very cautiously, and the reason was soon obvious. Each held in his hand a full cup of tea, which he was careful not to spill. In the other hand each held a hat, our hats. They were almost upon us when we saw them, and we called to them to hide. But no, they came straight on. Then we held our breath, for every moment we expected to hear a shot from the house and see one of them fall; but the house was silent, no shot came from it. And in a moment more the boys had reached us.

If you want to know what a cup of hot tea means, jump out of your bed after a bad night and pursue a murderer armed with a gun. Never have I drunk anything like that cup of tea, though we could not eat the piece of toast thoughtfully

placed in the saucer. Then we put on our hats and laughed. Yes, we actually laughed. So much difference does a cup of tea make to a fasting man!

I am afraid one's better feelings are rather at a discount at a time like this, for, instead of commending our servants, we abused them.

"You young fool," I said to mine, "you might have been shot. Lie quiet here at once." And Forest cheerfully told his boy he meant to beat him later on. But they only laughed. Then we turned again to the grim fact that was before us.

There was the murderer, here were we; how were we going to kill him? He, for his part, was keeping quiet, reserving his ammunition, no doubt.

I remember my thoughts very well. When the tea had made my blood flow a little more evenly I began to consider. "I am the magistrate," I said to myself. "They will look to me. I suppose I must rush that house. And the sepoys will then follow; we cannot sit here all day."

Then I looked about and saw the sepoys all hidden around, hidden from the house, but not from me. Further back, clustered in trees and in the openings of the lanes, were many Burmans. All the village had turned out to see. The sun had risen above the palm trees, and the world was full of light. I remember noticing the golden rays as they fell through an oleander bush not far off. They seemed very beautiful. "But after all he may miss," I reflected, and the reply was sudden—"He cannot miss."

I looked at Forest and his face was very white. I wondered what he was thinking of. I know now he thought much as I did. No one likes to rush upon certain death. Can you wonder that we hesitated?

And then our trouble was solved for us. It was solved not by any soldier, not by any man, not by any woman, but by a child, that child whom we met just now at the well.

We had thought her to be in the house with her mother, but it was not so. She had been away at the well drawing water, poor little mite, and now she returned.

No one saw her come, or she would have been stopped. We saw her first as she crossed the open space before the door. A

tiny little figure dressed in a red silk skirt, with bare chest and arms. Her face was puckered with grief, and big tears were rolling down her round cheeks. The water-jar on her head splashed its water down upon her arms and chest, for she was in too great a hurry to care for it.

The men about the house frightened her, these dark, savage-looking men with rifles, who all looked toward her house. She was terrified "Mamma!" she cried, "Mamma, mamma!"

We were motionless with surprise, with sorrow. It was so unexpected we knew not what to do.

Then there was a rustle in the house and a shot.

As if the sound had touched some string that loosened our nerves, all the men about leaped to their feet and ran. From every tree, from every cart, from beneath every house came men with rifles, rushing upon that house. Men raced to be there first, to get between the child and the death that lay before her.

But she was first; her little limbs were nerved with the swiftness of great fear, and ere we were half across the open space her hands were beating at the door. "Mamma!" she shrieked, glancing with terror over her shoulder.

The door suddenly gave way and she was inside the house. A moment later men were jostling in the doorway, their rifles and revolvers cocked, there was a gleam of sunlight on drawn swords and bayonets, a murmur of oaths and commands, and the house was taken.

For there was no defense; the murderer was dead.

Such a sight that house was! None that saw it can forget it. In the inner chamber near the door lay the woman. She was naked from the waist up, newly aroused from sleep. And in the center of her left breast was a dull red hole, from whence the blood trickled slowly and dully. It had made a red stream down her fair bosom and side, and dropped into a little pool beside her. She was not yet dead, and in her great eyes was an agony of appeal. Beside her crouched her little daughter, terrified beyond words, gazing in horrified question at her mother. A great bearded sepoy lifted her in his arms and carried her out in silence.

In the inner room lay Abdul Khan, dead. He had shot himself with his own rifle. He was in full uniform, and lay as

peacefully as if he slept. The tumult and passion had left him forever now, and his face was as calm as a child's. The wound with which he had killed himself was not visible.

His end, the end of the murderer and suicide, was peace, while, without, the moans of the woman wrung one's heart. But in an hour she, too, had come into her rest. So we went home.

There were many people anxious to adopt the child, and I gave her to Maung Laung. That is her story.

# THE Cashier: The Experience of an Amateur Detective, by Eugène Fourrier. Translated from the French by Suzanne Thorburn*

ON looking over his morning's mail, Cassajon, the banker, found a letter from the most important of his London correspondents, Mahenson, director of Mahenson & Company, that most trustworthy and influential of business houses, with which he had had dealings for many years.

This letter ran:

DEAR MONSIEUR CASSAJON—We come to you to ask you to do us a great favor! Our cashier, in whom we had the most unbounded confidence, has absconded, carrying with him four hundred thousand francs in securities. He embarked on the steamer *Japan*, whose destination is Bordeaux. What we want you to do is to meet him and make his acquaintance without arousing his suspicions, win your way into his confidence, so that he will confide his ill-gotten gains to your bank to be negotiated. When the securities are in your possession, will you return them to us? As to the thief, we have decided not to prosecute him, because he has a wife and five children, and because he has served us honestly for twenty-five years. So kindly give him fifty thousand francs if he will promise to go away and hide his shame in some distant land.

Believe me, yours, etc.——

and a minute description of the faithless cashier was appended.

*Translated for Short Stories.

The banker, Cassajon, much flattered by this confidential mission with which his British correspondent had honored him, resolved immediately to prove himself worthy of the high opinion his brother banker had of him—of him, a mere business acquaintance.

He awaited the arrival of the *Japan* with impatience. But all things come to an end, and one fine day the boat made its entry into the port of Bordeaux, about eleven o'clock, and Cassajon, mingling with the curious crowd on the wharf, scanned the passengers eagerly, and readily picked out the recreant cashier and followed him.

The thief, who was dressed in the latest style, went to the Hotel de L'Intendance. Cassajon followed him. The cashier, after securing a room, came down to the dining-room to breakfast; Cassajon sat down at the table beside him.

It is not difficult to make acquaintances at *table d'hôte*, and Cassajon soon succeeded in his efforts in that direction.

He commenced the conversation by—

"You have come to take a trip in France, Monsieur?'

"Yes, I want to see the country."

"You are very fortunate to be able to travel. To travel has always been my dream, but, sad to relate, my business has always kept me chained to Bordeaux."

"Are you a merchant?"

"Yes, a banker, of Cassajon & Co., at your service."

"Oh, what a fortunate meeting. I was going to look up a banker to sell some securities for me."

"Why, this *is* most fortunate, indeed," said Cassajon. "My house is one of the best in Bordeaux, and it will give me great pleasure to put its services at your disposal."

"If he'll only come with me," thought the banker to himself, "I'll have him trapped, surely."

"I have some bills to be discounted."

"That will be very easy to arrange; how much do they represent?"

"They are for four hundred thousand francs. Can you give me that much?"

"Certainly; after breakfast we'll go to the bank."

"Very well; I am enchanted to have met one of your profession so soon; let's go now; I am in a hurry."

"Truly," thought the banker, "these thieves are not very clever at concealing their crimes,"

They left the hotel, the unsuspicious Englishman followed by Cassajon.

The banker showed the stranger into his private office and offered him a chair.

The cashier seated himself.

"Kindly give me your notes," said the banker.

The Englishman sorted out these documents from other papers in his pocketbook, and handed them to Cassajon.

The banker verified them, they were quite correct; they represented indeed four hundred thousand francs. He shut them up in his safe, shot the bolt of his office door, and, whipping a pistol out of his pocket, aimed it at the cashier.

"Monsieur," he said, calmly, "you are a rascal."

The Englishman made a gesture of astonishment.

"I know very well who you are," went on Cassajon; "it's useless for you to deny it. You are the cashier of my esteemed London correspondent, Mahenson & Co. They advised me of your expected arrival here; I recognized you from their description, and followed you—you know the rest."

The cashier made a motion as if he would rise, but the banker turned his pistol toward him, saying firmly:

"If you dare to take one step, I will kill you."

"I am ruined," murmured the Englishman, sinking back in his chair.

The banker was beginning to enjoy his triumphant "catch."

"All resistance is useless; the least attempt at escape, and I will call and have you arrested."

"I am lost, I am lost," stammered the man; "my poor wife, my poor children."

"You should have thought of them before. How could you, a husband and father, have so forgotten your duties," said Cassajon, severely.

"I lost money betting on the races. I put all my money on the "Fille du Nord," and she was beaten. I had to get money somewhere, and so—"

"And so you stole your employer's."

"I lost my head, I did not realize what I was doing," moaned the thief.

"A cashier should never gamble," said Cassajon, sententiously.

"I am a scoundrel, I know. I would like to kill myself. Give me the pistol and I'll do it this instant."

"No, not here; your employers have given me certain instructions as to what course of action to is be taken toward you."

"I submit myself to their decision."

"Out of regard for your children and your past services, they wish no scandal; they wish the matter hushed up."

"Thanks for my poor wife," sighed the thief.

"They only wish the notes returned, and, instead of delivering you up to justice and hard labor, they intend to look after your future welfare."

"That will be too much kindness," said the cashier, much affected.

"With generosity, which I hope you appreciate, Mahenson & Co. have charged me to give you fifty thousand francs, if you will go to some distant land and live an honest man."

" I will be honest in the future, I swear it," said the cashier, burying his face in his hands.

"I trust so," said the banker, counting out fifty bills of a thousand francs each to the faithless cashier, who immediately pocketed them and left the room, with his head still buried in his hands, his whole frame convulsed with emotion.

Then Cassajon, satisfied with the manner in which he had conducted his mission, sat down and wrote his business friends:

*Messieurs Mahenson & Co.:*

DEAR SIRS—I have paid strict attention in every particular to your instructions contained in yours of the 15th inst., and I was so happy as to gain the confidence of your absconding cashier the day of his arrival, and he has just left the notes which he had stolen from you in my possession. I will return them immediately, minus the fifty thousand francs which you told me to give him. Your generosity seems to have made a great impression on him, and he thanks you in the name of his wife and children, and has promised to become an honest man again. Permit me, though, to say, my dear friends, that though your generosity is most worthy of imitation, still it seems to me a bad example to set, that of rewarding cashiers who steal one's money.

By return mail the banker received this:

DEAR MONSIEUR CASSAJON—You have been the victim of a malicious and audacious thief! Our cashier has not stolen

a cent from us, he is always at his post, and has never betrayed our confidence. The notes you returned to us are forged. As to the fifty thousand francs you gave so cheerfully and trustingly to this swindler—"Permit me to say, my dear friend, that though your generosity is most worthy of imitation, still it seems to me a bad example to set, that of giving money to the first rascal that comes along and asks for it." I'm afraid you'll have to stand the loss.

Cassajon has retired from business,

# THE Broken Dream: A Tale of Treasure-Trove, by George Morley*

HE came and sat upon the middle of the stile, after a rough salutation to the young man who was standing there before he arrived.

"'Tis forty year since I sat on this stile," he said, without introduction, without even looking at the person beside him; merely with his eye—literally he had only one eye, the other, as he afterwards said, being "bossed" through contact with a volatile champagne cork which shot him one evening when attending the officers' mess—lovingly fixed upon the cottage ends and yellow rick-corners of the back of Lynton village.

"Ah! forty year," he repeated, with a profoundly deep sigh, suggestive of early hopes and later failures. "But this Duffus Close hev altered to what it were. The brook yon were wider nor it is now. There were a plank over it where the bridge be, and a little further down a ladder were stretched over. Well, to be sure! Ah! this field were a field of gold then; it were so, indeed."

"I were a little chap in pinna and pericuts. Ah! that mun be fifty year ago—quite. I mind it well as if 'twere only yesterday, 'cause it were mother's Mothering, and I, being the dilling, were put to bed and left under that straw roof-tree yander by meself till about two i' the morning. I were born and bred at Lynton. My feyther were sexton at church for forty year. You can see his name on gravestone yon: 'George Somers, sexton o' this parish,' and so on; and his

*From The Gentleman's Magazine.

feyther afore him were sexton too; and I—well, I'm just nothing: only a bit of a rover with no rest for the sole o' me foot."

The man paused and wiped away a thin film which had grown over his eye. Then he sought to hide this small piece of feeling from his stile-fellow. He took a pipe and pouch of tobacco from his pocket, loaded the pipe, struck a match upon his nether garments, and speedily raised a cloud of smoke, behind which he recovered his self-possession.

"Yes," he continued, with a face shining once more like a bronze apricot polished with monkey soap, "I was a little kiddy in pinna and pericuts, but I mind it as well as if 'twere but yesterday, and, as I tell ye, it must be quite fifty year ago.

"I think a child never forgets any uncommon thing as falls to it. *I* hanna, that's for sure; and I think all young 'uns are pretty near the same. There's some things I wish I could forget—for one, the warming I got from feyther for playing the wag one arternoon and goin' watercressing i' the brook yon. But there's many as we never want to forget, and carn't forget, 'cause they be fixed in our minds like the skin on our own bodies; and I mind that field o' gold as if 'twere yesternight; I do that."

His one eye swept over the grass again with the sort of admiring glance which a lover gives to his mistress.

Much traveled though he was, the look of his native meads and babbling runnels reopened the heart of the boy within him, and held him as in a spell. It was heaven to him just then to be far from the madding crowd—to exchange the din of the docks for the unbroken tranquillity of wide-stretching green lands, the strange oath of the seafaring man for the plaintive moaning of the wooded dove.

The man's face looked unutterable thanks for that period upon the stile.

"I were getting over the stile,you must know—ah! this very stile," he went on. "I were getting through the bars on it, that is; for, being such a lil kiddy, I could easily creep through the spaces. But lor! the hedges weren't like as 'em be now —cut lowish, like this 'en. Why, they were twelve or fifteen feet high, and elm trees growin' in 'em here and there.

"Old Tommy Court, as kep' the Farm yander, were as rich as a Jew—heaps o' money; but never a bill-hook in his fences would he hev then. But arterwards, though, when the Bank

broke at Brookington, and he lost ten thousand pounds along o' it, he growed hungry and had 'em chopped down right and left, elm trees and all, and sold to the timber dealer at Cuddington.

"But when I came to this stile the fence were so high that it had growed right over and med a gret arch like the doorway to Arwick Castle An', behold you, when I crept through the stile, and looked over the Duffus Close, my little heart jumped up so as I could scarcely hold 'en.

"The grass were covered wi' gold!—sovereigns and half-sovereigns all over the place, each side the pathway! Hundreds and thousands on 'em—cartloads!"

The man's one eye glistened like a gold coin itself with the excitement produced by the remembrance of the sight he was describing Perhaps the thought, too, that at that moment he was not worth one single coin of all the golden harvest that he beheld that day in the Duffus Close operated to increase the excitement.

With a glib tongue, the outcome of his long residence on shipboard, he proceeded with his narrative.

"I couldn't tell what to think when I see'd all this gold sprawling about; but, mind ye, I were knowing enough to know that it *was* gold and that I mun hev some on it. Childlike, I were in a mortal hurry to pick up as much on it as I could. My parents were poor, hard-working folk, and it come into my little yed how nice a hundred or two sovereigns would be for mother and feyther.

"Sure, I thought, in my childish fancy, Tommy Court had been emptying his money-bags in the Close in one on them drunken fits as he were often hevin'. But I cared not a bit whose money it had been. There it was, lying in an open field, and I meant to hev some.

"Nobody was coming. Not a soul was to be seen anywhere, although it was a time and season when many folk used to stroll over these fields; not even the fat form of Tommy Court himself was to be seen stanning between the two yew trees as used to grow up by them iron railings yon. An' so I thought the gold were for me.

"I picked up the outside edges of me pinna and began to fill it like one o'clock. Soon I'd got so many sovereigns and half-sovereigns that the pinna wouldn't hold any more. An' then came the difficulty. You see, I was on this side the

bank—same as we be now. There was only a a foot wide to cross over by, an' the brook was full o' water. How to get to t'other side an' not lose any o' the sovereigns was what I didn't know.

"I can see meself now in the little red pericut, the blue biggen on me head wi' the fox-fur round it (med by me mother's own fingers, for she was a dab hand wi' the needle, poor soul), an' me white pinna bulging out like a loaded hammock wi' the gold as I'd got in it. I might hev saved meself that trouble, for there was heaps o' gold on the other side o' the brook; but, childlike, I never thought o' that, an' grabbed at the first as came to hand.

"How slow I moved along the first steps o' that plank! I went no faster nor the crawl of a house-a-back snail. When I got to the middle—plop—plop—plop! come a noise bobbing up from the brook. I looked down at me pinna, an', behold ye, the gold were running out at each side an' dropping into the water!

"I gripped me pinna like grim death, an' tried to stop losing the money. But ah!—I mind it as well as if 'twere but yesterday—in the excitement I missed me footing, an' fell i' the brook, gold an' all!"

The speaker's face passed through a variety of hues and shades. It was as though the possession of so much gold and the dramatic loss of it at so early an age had been the cause of the tosses and buffets of his after-life up to the hour of his sitting on the stile. His face certainly gave the impression of disappointment, even at that lapse of time; but the shade of disappointment was only momentary. It gave place to a smile, which broadened out to a cheerful laugh, as he said:

"An' when I woke I was yelling like a farmyard cock, just as mother came home from the Mothering; an' I was fund gripping the bedclothes tight in each hand, as if 'twere the pinna I were holding to keep the gold from falling out!"

"Then it was only a dream?" said the listener, with a touch of disgust at so tame a conclusion to what promised to be an exciting story.

"Ah! a dream it was," replied the man on the stile sadly, "an' I donna seem to hev waked out on it even yet. That golden Duffus Close hev been afore me eyes wherever I hev

been—in all parts of the world. I'm seeing it every night a'most in me sleep; an' coming here to-day, an' seeing you here, med me tell it out agen, same as I see'd it above fifty year ago. Strange, indeed, inna it?"

"Well, it is rather odd," returned his stile-companion carelessly.

The dream-teller sidled off the stile and walked a few steps into the Close. A pitchfork, forgotten by some of the late haymakers, lay under a stunted hawthorn bush that overhung the brook. The man picked it up carelessly and drove the prongs into the inner circle of what is known as a "fairy ring."

"Just about here," he said, turning his head over his shoulder, "was a gret heap. Hey, if I'd only a quarter of what was there, I should be a happy man. But Lord! I never was in luck; an' my brother Wag's got houses of his own."

The prongs struck some substance in the earth, and gave out a smart sound like a hammered tuning-fork. It made the man start; that sound at once opened up for him such magnificent possibilities. He struck the fork in again. It gave out a sharp, clear ring, conclusively establishing the fact that something—perhaps of value, perhaps only an old horse-shoe—lay embedded there.

"'Twere said as Tommy Court med away wi' his cash-box afore a died, for fear o' robberies. Belike 'tis here," cried the one-eyed man, with growing excitement.

Under the vigorous prods of the fork the turf flew up easily, as though it had lain there for days instead of decades. In a few minutes a box like a tea-caddy was torn out of the ground by the native fortune-hunter. He raised the lid with trembling fingers. The first thing that met his single eye was a slip of paper, upon which appeared the words—

"The finder can keep this.

"THOMAS COURT."

Beneath it was literally "a gret heap" of golden money in excellent preservation, though it had been buried more than forty years. The one-eyed man was "in luck" at last. He cried with joy:

"'Tis my dream broken arter all. The Duffus Close *is* golden"

# WANTED—A Few Indigents: The Story of a "County House," by Harriet Whitney*

GAMALIEL DOCKTHORN scrubbed his left ear abstractedly with the big roller towel, and gazed upon his wife in some bewilderment.

Tabitha danced nervously up and down, and broke into irritated expostulation:

"My scissors! Don't stand there a-gogglin' your eyes at me like a potato-bug; and don't wriggle yourself into forty loops like an angle worm that's just been dug! Haven't I explained till I'm black in the face that there's no other way out of it, or round it, or through it, if we want to keep a whole roof over our heads? 'Twasn't our fault old Uncle Billy Bumpus would die, spite o' raisin gruel two o'clock mornings and everything we could do to keep him from it. I ain't a-sayin' he done it to spite us, pore old man, but who was we to superintend after he went—and the Board not as much as comin' to his funeral, or a-askin' who we'd got left? Didn't Hash tell you the scheme for to-morrow?"

"Hash lies so fast," Gamaliel began, slowly, but Tabitha snapped him off:

"Well, I don't, then. And, what's more, nights when you've snored away comfortable I've been a-jabbin' my brain thinkin' where we was a-comin' out, and it come to me it couldn't do anybody a sift of harm, and us a pile of good; and if you'd ketch a-hold—you're about as inspiring generally as a bundle of wet cotton, but if you'd stop gogglin' and look a little interested for once——"

*Written for Short Stories.

Gamaliel held up his large hand as a kind of dam to the tide of Tabitha's volubility.

"I wisht," he remarked, mildly, "you'd keep still long enough fer me to say something. Hash tole me some yarn about him an' me a-startin' out to-morrow a-getherin' inmates, but I ain't yit got into my brain precisely why we should go a-getherin' poor folks like they was blackberries. The county-house is here; let 'em come; we'll take 'em, willin', but whut we want to go a-fishin' fer 'em fer——"

He ceased polishing his ear, which was now as red and shiny as a ripe tomato, and again sought enlightenment from his wife's shrewd little face.

"Gamaliel"—Tabitha spoke in a tone of patient exasperation; then she laid down her knive and the potato she was about to pare, wiped her hands and sat down—"what's a county house *for?*"

"Inmates," responded Gamaliel, tractably.

"Well done," pronounced Tabitha, with sarcastic commendation; "it is so. And if the last tinker of 'em dies (at the age of ninety-four), and the county's so sassy and prosperous nobody'll poke the end of their nose onto the place, even when you give out you'd make short'ning bread once a day and two kinds of pie every Sunday, how long do you reckon the county'll give us a home, let alone pay us a salary for superintendin' ourselves?"

"Might call Hash a inmate," ventured Gamaliel, speculatively.

Tabitha made a sound that could only be classified as a snort.

"Yes, sure; we might call a big giant six and a half feet high and broad as a barn door and strong as an elephant a dependent on the county; but I ain't right sure the county'd call him that. Now, the wind-up of the business is, you and Hash have got to get out good and early in the morning and just naturally get some inmates. Go over to Flat River, and Snake Hollow and Jelliby. Don't look natural there shouldn't be nobody a-needin' a home, somewhere; they'll get a good shake-down here. You ain't much more enterprisin' than a stuffed rabbit, yourself, but with Hash to boost you along——"

Tabitha arose, picked up her potato and dropped her discourse simultaneously, and Gamaliel went out and sat upon the saw buck to meditate.

The barometer of Tabitha Dockthorn's spirits kept buoyantly up until the tail-board of the farm wagon melted among the leaves at the turn of the lane the next morning. Then she sat herself upon the smooth top of the old stump in the back yard, utilized as a chopping block, and fanned herself nervously with her blue sunbonnet Her conscience had not got to the nagging point; it had merely given her a mild nip.

"'Tain't goin' to hurt 'em any," her argument began. "They'll come of their own free good will most likely; sure to, fur as Gam's concerned; as fer Hash, everybody in the county'd ought to know what Hash is. And who'll it hurt, I'd like to know? No, I *ain't* done anything dishonest, neither." Tabitha flounced off her stump and began to gather chips into her apron with much animation.

She made up seven beds that day, with a bolster and three fat pillows apiece, and was just topping the last one off with a patchwork quilt of the flower-pot pattern, when a rattling of wheels in the lane and a stoppage at the gate occasioned her skirts to swirl round and round and stand out like the petals of a sunflower with the swiftness of her rush to the window, where she stood eagerly "counting noses."

"Three, and me countin' on at least seven! But that's better than none. Lemme look; I never seen that man with a long neck and ears a-stickin' straight out like fins. Well, Granny! Look at that woman in the draggled-y white dress and yarn half-hands! And the old lady—oh, scissors and sausages! if they oughtn't to be beat, them two men! they've got Granny Picket, pore old Granny that was always scared to fits about a pore-house. It ain't possible that ornary niece and nephew-in-law of hers wa'n't willing to keep her till John come back, but she wouldn't a-come of herself. Yet, look, she's gazin' up at the place as smilin' as a new nickel, and lookin' as spry with her crutch——"

Tabitha cut off her speculations and brought up on the lower porch in time to receive a plump old crippled woman in a black woollen dress and sunbonnet, who smiled like an elderly infant as the men helped her up the steps.

"Looks right tasty an' han'some, don't it?" she said, her round old face glowing genially. "I allus said I wouldn't begrudge nothin' ef I had a house with a big long porch, an' John was allus promisin' me one some day, an' vines round

it, an' a big yard an' gooseberry bushes; an' here they all air—well, well. ef John could only be here hisself——"

"But I don't see any madery vine; I hoped there'd be a madery vine; they're so kind of twisty an' romantical," criticised the woman in the white dress, a rather meagerly made person, whose age appeared to range vaguely between thirty-five and fifty-five. Her dress was a crinkled seersucker, originally cream-colored, of the kind that is supposed not to need ironing; in this instance, the wearer had evidently been under the impression that it did not need washing, either; but this was in a measure atoned for by the pink ribbon which did duty as a belt, and was held in its place by a good-sized safety-pin. A limp hat, with a dismal feather trailing over the brim, and the brown, knit half-gloves completed her costume. As she tripped nimbly up the porch steps, Gamaliel introduced her to his wife:

"This here is Miss Blondine Grinder, come to stay a while. An' this here," reaching after the man with the long neck, who twisted it bashfully about and grinned, "is Leonidas J. Blue, Esquire."

Tabitha shook hands with her guests, and then turned her attention to the old lady.

"I'm proud to see you, Granny; we've got the big south room fixed for you, slick as a peeled onion. If you'll hook on to Miss Grinder with your off arm, and me with the near one, we'll have you up there while them fellows are boosting your trunk up."

The task of landing the rheumatic inmate who, in one end of a balance would have sent Tabitha and Miss Grinder in the other skyward, was accomplished to the entire satisfaction of Granny, and she sat glowing in her big arm chair, babbling placidly about John and the gooseberries and the patchwork quilt on her bed, while Miss Grinder rubbed her arm, wriggled her back to get the crick out of it, and vowed in grim undertones that the old lady must weigh a ton at the least estimate.

Tabitha, herself, was panting, but otherwise fresh and eager, and was already waiting in the kitchen when Gamaliel came downstairs, to pounce upon him and exact a detailed statement concerning the pursuit and capture of the inmates. Gamaliel rubbed the wintry hedge of whisker about his chin thoughtfully, and made reply:

"Hit was Hash's doin's, mostly, about Granny; lied like Cuffy to her. Her kinfolks they was a-packin' to move out west an' take her along, but Hash, he told her a yarn about John a-comin' home soon, an' how he'd sent on ahead an' bought her a fine place an' wanted her to settle in it an' be here when he come; an' Granny swallowed it like buttered griddle cakes."

"The simple old lamb!" Tabitha's elbows worked on springs, and her hands flew up like rockets. "Granny'd go into duck fits if she ever suspicioned where she was at. Hash'd ought to been muzzled before he made that innocent old baby swallow any such a yarn."

"Hash wouldn't tell the straight truth no time, ef a lie'd do him jest as well. You sed we hed to git inmates,an' he said ther' wasn't but that way to scoop Granny. You can't unfool her now; her folks was jest a-rustlin' to git away, an' they're 'way yonder by now. Might es well make the best of it."

"I hate it like pizen," Tabitha grumbled. "How about them other two?"

Gamaliel's brow untwisted.

"Got *them* straight es a string. Leonidas Blue, he was a-livin' with some folks over at Sandy, chorin' round, an' croppin', an' the pie an' biscuit fetched him. Didn't like the grub he was gittin', he said, ner the woman's cookin', an' he wasn't a-goin' to scratch his throat with corn dodgers no longer, ef he could do better livin' at the county-house. Miss Grinder, she come willin', too. She dress-made an' sewed round Sandy. First, she got mad enough to eat us, but when she found Mr. Blue was a-comin', she hopped over the other side nimble es a eel, an' 'lowed she hadn't a proud hair in her head, an' she'd es soon come es not."

Three weeks from the gathering in of the inmates, Tabitha Dockthorn struck, on several points.

"'Tain't the pie an' the hot bread," she exploded, vehemently, to Gamaliel who stood mildly chewing a stalk of timothy in the doorway, "I'd laid off to give the folks good square feed, an' I've lived up to my word; but I never guaranteed *cocoanut* pie *every* Sunday. If apple slice pie an' egg custards don't suit Blondine Grinder, she might pull her feet around a little faster and make a pie or two herself, in place

of mincing and snurling at other folks' pies; standin' up there flatfooted and telling me my pie was sour enough to make a pig squeal, and the syrup a-sizzlin' up in it right then. And a-callin' good hot Graham biscuit for breakfast 'pig feed'! She 'lowed she'd leave it to Leonidas if 'twasn't so; and him a-gogglin' about as if he knew beans when he saw 'em! I can make him eat anything I'm a mind to by settin' it acrost t'other side the table. so's he thinks it's put out of his way. He'd eat fried soap 'f he thought you didn't want him to. But put finger to a lick o' work, neither of 'em won't; skipping off after meals and settin' on the porch, and me slavin' for 'em in the kitchen. Blondine looked cross-eyed and snurly for a good hour 'cause I wanted her to help do the dishes; then she 'lowed she'd wash her own cup and sasser and plate, if I was going to be so pizen particular."

Gamaliel opened his mouth to speak, but Tabitha, cutting in ahead with a continuation of her tribulations, he placidly closed it again.

"We got to treat 'em fair and keep 'em contented in reason, but, inmates or no inmates, I won't be trampled no longer. I've struck on cocoanut pie, and whut's more, I've struck on frying griddle cakes for supper on hot evenings. They'll eat cold bread, or cook the griddle cakes theirselves, beginning this day."

With her lips closed tightly and her head high in the air, Tabitha rang a peal of rebellion and the supper bell at the same time, and after serving Granny in her own room, awaited the appearance of the refractory inmates at the supper table with much stiffness of spine.

The minutes sped; the coffee cooled, and Tabitha, waxing indignant, set out, like a little elderly Bopeep, to find her lost, strayed or stolen sheep. The long front porch was deserted; Miss Grinder's apartment was empty and lone; a note, addressed to Tabitha, was pinned to the blue paper shade, to this purport:

"We refuse longer to be prisoners and slaves to despotts and tirants, me and Leonidas. We don't like your pie. You don't put enough grease in your biscuit, and your pancakes ain't what they were bragged up to be. We are going, hand in hand, through the flowery lane of romance to the blissful bower of matrimony BLONDINE GRINDER

(Soon to be Blue)."

It began, in time, to be blown to the perceptions of Gamaliel and Hash that the elopement had, in some wise, taken the merry breezes out of Tabitha's mental sails, and caused them to sag and flap most dolefully. The fact that she ate little was not so terrifying to Gamaliel as the further one that she talked little. He could recall periods in their wedded life when her appetite had failed—never one when her tongue had. Gamaliel was troubled, and in the affection of his heart sought to cheer his partner by the proposition of another inmate-gathering expedition.

Tabitha all at once recovered the use of her tongue.

"No, you needn't," she caught him up; "we're done gatherin' inmates. I don't 'low to be wore to a frizzle account of arguin' with my old conscience night and day, any longer; it's worse than fleas. Here it come a-yappin' at me like a little fyste-dog when I was makin' a queen puddin' one day out o' county hen eggs, and been a-yappin' ever since. I don't care shucks now, about Blondine Grinder and Leonidas Blue, but I do hate like pizen to set right down and put it to the Board in wash-blue that we've got one lone inmate, let alone that one was gethered in by straight lying."

"Don't *make* no rotten ole report." Hash, who was admiring a damson plum pie sitting in the window-sill to cool, cast in an offhand suggestion. "Them Board fellers don't give a turnip seed how things is run out here. Ole man Tinker's too drunk to know his head from a hornet's nest, an' time the others gets through cheatin' one another hoss swappin', they ain't got no time left to fool with county-houses, 'long es you don't call their attention to 'em by makin' reports. Ef they meddle any fer a change, lie out of it."

"No, we sha'n't *lie out* of it, neither," Tabitha buzzed up indignantly; "we've told lies enough, an' acted 'em, without going head over heels deeper. We'll tell the truth for once. I'd skin out of here to-night and sleep in a cabbage patch, only for Granny. I could holler when I think of Granny."

Gamaliel fingered his fringe of whisker mutely. Hash advanced an offhand suggestion:

"Might get her off on the poor farm over in Biggs County; they got one, all right."

"Ahasuerus John Sparkins!"

A loutish wedding guest might have been impressed by a bristly little female Ancient Mariner somewhat as was Mr.

Sparkins by Tabitha, who arose (literally) in her wrath, her face redder than a hollyhock.

"You say 'poor farm' and 'Granny' to me again in one day and I'll dump a ruta-baga at your head—I will, as sure as you're a good-for-nothing scamp. Granny'll be took care of, if you and Gam and me eat scrapin's and parin's; you get that into your noddle. I'll take in washin' every day and weave carpets every night, and you and Gam'll maul rails and chop sprouts, and we'll all live on sheep sorrel, but Granny'll have the best in the county and never know what's happened."

"Jest so," Hash's abashed grin became normal once more, "sheep sor'l is first-rate grub, an' washin' an' maulin's good exercise—for you an' Gam. I reckon I'll go on the railroad a spell."

Gamaliel Dockthorn sat upon the kitchen doorstep in the glow of autumn, listening with dejected interest to the sizzling of bacon and the spatting of corn cakes on a hot griddle just within, shaking his gray old head from time to time in dismal foreboding. So far as human knowledge might penetrate, it was the last meal he and Tabitha were to enjoy off the county's products.

"'Nless they'd keep *us* es inmates, an' send somebody else to sup'ntend," he reflected, dubiously, "we ain't no other means o' livin', es I kin see."

Tabitha's report had brought back a scratchy notification from one of the horse-trading Board, to the effect that "bein' the' wasn't any use for a county-house, they'd sold it out to a man that had took a notion to live on it, and he would be there——" on this very day that Tabitha was flying about mournfully among her pots, her thoughts flitting faster than her feet and hands, amidst fragments of remorseful plaint, bits of scriptural reflection, and scraps of practical planning:

"Dodson's old cabin's better than outdoors, I reckon, if the roof does leak like a sifter, and the chimley's about to fall in a heap; I'll find a dry corner for Granny, and it's a refuge to flee into—the wicked flee when no man pursues; that's us, but a man does pursue; and nothing to put in Granny's room: there's our old parlor carpet we used to have; she'll have that. Retribution's overtook us, and we ought to go and eat shucks like the prodigal, but Granny

sha'n't; I've got an old waffle iron somers; I'll make waffles fer her. We're as bad as Nebuchadnezzar, too, livin' on county things, serve us right to eat grass a spell, Gam and me; but it was more me than Gam. I believe I could make a big chair out of a barrel and stuff and cover it so's it would do as good as a rocker for Granny."

"Bithy!" Gamaliel's voice broke upon her disjointed meditations, "Company's come; here's Miss Grinder."

"No, here ain't Miss Grinder," a narrow, sour, puckery voice responded; "I'm *Mrs.* Leonidas *Blue*."

It was the same old seersucker dress that trailed up the back steps and into the kitchen, and the same flat hat and limp feather appeared that had adorned Miss Grinder on her first appearance at the county-house. Mrs. Blue's claim to anything in the way of fresh bridal attire was supported only by a new cotton-back satin ribbon of pale yellow, fastened unevenly in front with a long black pin which protruded a sharp and threatening point.

Tabitha greeted the visitor without undue fervor.

"You needn't look so sour at me," Mrs. Blue tossed her head, with the effect of tipping the flat hat over her ear, "I didn't come to get a meal of vittles, ner I don't want none of yer hoe-cakes an' bacon gravy. I left a box of drop chalk up in my room, an' some invisible hair-pins an' I want 'em —I s'pose you haven't throwed 'em away."

"Prob'ly you'll find whatever you left there." Tabitha turned her back square upon her visitor, and bestowed her entire attention upon the corn cakes. Mrs. Blue did what she afterward described as sweeping out of the room. Tabitha said she "drug the tail of that ole crumply white seersucker slap through everything, and nearly upsot the salt-east."

"Run yere a minute, Bithy"; Gamaliel jerked his head inside the door and out again, and stood staring with a puckered squint through an orchard aisle, where a tall, straight figure was moving rapidly toward the house, "hit's a man a-comin', an' he looks like somebuddy, but I'll swear I can't say who, my eyes has got so mean. Is it Hash, do you reckon, Bithy, come back again?"

"I'll insure you 'tain't no Hash; them kind o' fellers don't come where there's trouble, don't you ever think." Bithy set her griddle off the stove and came and looked out where Gamaliel's crooked forefinger was pointing. "Well for the—

Gam, you old oyster, don't you know John Pickett? And now Granny'll be took care of, thank the Lord! But he'll just naturally eat *us*, for a-gettin' her here in the county house. Howdy, John, come up. We know you'll kill us, Gam and me, but we ain't a-keerin', now Granny'll be all right."

John's long steps covered the ground quickly. He was a tall, square-looking fellow of thirty-odd, with a plain, good face. His eyes were good-humored, but his mouth at the present time was grave. He was on the kitchen step before he spoke:

"Howdy, Gamaliel; howdy, Bithy. I've been a-hearing queer sort o' yarns about mother. Now, I want the straights of it."

"John, we never meant no harm to Granny, ner we wouldn't have fooled a hair of her head, Gam and me, and I'll tell you the whole thing straight es a tape measure, but I'll say right now, first of all, Granny ain't got no idea, no more than a dear old baby, that she's ever eat county house vittles er drank county house coffee—"

"Ain't, hey?" It was the narrow, sour voice again, with a flavoring of satisfied malice, that interrupted Tabitha's explanations, and Mrs. Blue's narrow, sour face grinned balefully at Tabitha, under the flat hat, "You better go up an' tend to your ma, Mr. John; she's havin' all kinds of fits, an' takin' on awful, 'count of these here folks a-leadin' her into a trap, like they done me and Leonidas."

"You've *told* her, you—you pizen female tarrapin!" shrieked Tabitha, trying frantically to hit upon a word befitting Mrs. Blue's duplicity, "you couldn't leave the pore innocent creature in peace; you've went a-crawlin' round underhanded in the grass, like a low, snaky, slippery snail—and that's whut you air. Now look a-yonder; there's the kitchen door already open, and you put out, and cut dirt, too, Blondine Grinder!"

"Blue," corrected Blondine, with an airy toss, and a grin that came near to throwing Tabitha into a spasm. As the trail of the seersucker swept over the kitchen doorstep and vanished, the little woman, almost beside herself with indignation and grief, turned and went racing after John, who had gone lumbering headlong upstairs in search of his mother. The

poor old woman's piteous appeals to her son smote Tabitha's ears as she reached the upper step:

"'Tain't so, is it, John? 'Tain't no county house, is it, with all them nice vines on the porch, an' the gooseberry bushes, an' puddin' fer dinner; she said it was, that Miss Grinder woman, an' hoped she'd die if it wasn't, an' if I hadn't been eatin' county vittles all 'long an' sleepin' on county chicken feathers, an' said I was only a county expense that Bithy Dockthorn'd gethered in so's she could stay here herself—Bithy, that's been better to me than anyone ever was but you, John—'tain't so, John, *'tain't* so, is it?"

"No, it ain't," John's voice rang down clear cut and prompt; "that woman's tongue's longer than a garden hose. Don't you worry a grain, mammy; this here house is mine, an' yours; an' now I'm back home, I'm a-going to put a porch outside o' your windows, and have 'em cut down, so's you can step right out an' set out on the porch in your rockin' chair."

Tabitha stole back downstairs, a little bud of hope in her heart that she dared not coddle lest it should turn out a false bloom on the barren stalk of despair, and John's exhilarating words prove but a species of soothing drops for Granny's hurt self-respect. John had never been an especially progressive young man, but rather the patient plodder, who had stuck to his monotonous furrow until the acquisition of a tract of wild land left him by a nomadic uncle six months before had called him out West, at which time Granny had been left with her niece and nephew, who were pledged to take the best care of her until her son's return.

To Tabitha, ever after that day the steam of baked potatoes was associated with John's home-coming. A dim vision of herself dishing up something, and Gamaliel gazing hungrily at the dish as John came into the kitchen, always arose with the odor of the wrinkly, brown-baked skins and bursting creamy meal. She had a further dim vision of herself whisking at John, dish and all, and yelling shrilly:

"John, if you don't want to see me just naturally crumble up into a heap of smidgens, tell me quick if you was a lyin' to Granny about the house. You done it fer the best, if it was lie—but *was* it?"

John's answering smile shone out of his quiet eyes.

"It wasn't a lie, Tabithy," he said, "it's so. Don't be

thinkin' I'm a millioner; I've put every dollar I had into it, but mammy's got a home, es I always 'lowed she should. Never knowed how it felt to pay taxes on a truck patch till Uncle Liphalet left me that wild track in the Skookum country. Wild! Jungles ain't nothin'. You'd have to chop an' clear out a place to stand in before you could cut a tree. Lumberin's pretty good business out yonder, if you only own the team, let alone the timber, an' the old tin cup I had hid away in a holler stump was most full. Well, folks, first thing out o' the box, here comes Sim and Liza; been driftin' round here an' yonder, an' fetched up at my camp, an' told the darndest yarn they'd heard, about me buyin' a fine house for mammy. Ginger! When I found out who'd told the yarn, it struck me all of a heap that if I didn't scratch gravel fer home an' get her out before she got it into her head where she was at, houses ner nothing else wouldn't be any use to her long. I was just about to dig out the tin cup, when here come a great buzz about the Skookum and Red Gulch Railroad cuttin' through a corner of my jungle; an' maybe that jungle wasn't chased after like a cyclone! Ef I could a-held on till the road ran through, I could a-bought the county with one slice of jungle, but with mammy at the county house—No, sir! I grabed the best chance I got an' streaked, an' run against them old goats of a Board havin' a meetin' over the last report they'd got. Then I caught an idy, right straight from heaven, an' offered to buy out the county house with my jungle money. They most fell over one another snappin' the offer. There's forms has got to be gone through with, soon as court sets again, but one of the goats, Squire Tinker, he said he'd insure there wouldn't be no trouble about the sale, an' I could hev possession slap off, fur es the Board keered."

Tabitha, standing stock still, listening to John's story with her mouth open and the steaming dish in both hands, at the last word broke into a sudden startling hop, and then executed a very fair specimen of a cake walk across the kitchen floor, wafting the potatoes about as a kind of banner, while Gamaliel watched the performance apprehensively, with a fear for the potatoes.

"Deserve it I don't!" she asserted, setting the dish upon the cupboard instead of the table, "but there's a load off my head bigger than a barn. I don't keer shucks—no, not shucks, if me and Gam do have to go live in Dobson's cabin; I

don't keer if it leaks like a sifter; I don't keer if it's plum full of red hornets; I won't grumble if there's terrapins and spiders ner grand-daddy-long-legs a-sitting in every corner, I'm so thankful about Granny being in her own house."

"Well," John made reply, with a dry smile, "ain't a grain of use fer you an' Gam to go live amongst wasps an' reptiles, Tabithy. Who'd cook fer mammy an' me? She says nobody can't make the puddin's you do. She wants you to stay, an' mammy's a-goin' to hev whut she wants, when it kin be got. An' who'd I get to help raise garden truck an' take keer of things, that'd do it better than Gam? I've got to have help outside the house an' in."

"John, I ain't got a syllable left—not a one; I can't say 'A-b,' ab.' I'm beat." Tabitha melted limply into a chair and cried with the vigor of a three-year-old; then perceiving the consternation of John and Gamaliel, she sprang upon her feet with a peal of rather shaky laughter.

"I reckon I'm crazy as a doodle bug," she observed, wiping her eyes on her apron, "and 'tain't no wonder. But I ain't going to starve you fellers, and I'll hev the dinner on the table in a skift now, such as 'tis. I tuck Granny's dinner up before I fixed ours, but I'm a-going to stir up a cornstarch blue-monge and take her up. Es for me, I'm too full ot thank-fulness to eat a vittle."

# Anecdotes.

IN this department a first prize of $5.00 in gold, and second and third prizes of an annual subscription to Short Stories each, will be given for the best, the second and the third best original or selected anecdotes sent in before the 1st day of the month following the date of this issue. No other compensation is made for matter used in this department. **The sources from which all selected or reprinted anecdotes have been taken must be clearly stated. The Editor cannot return contributions or correspond about them. If the story is valuable keep a copy of it.** Address "Anecdotes," care The Current Literature Publishing Co., 34 West 26th Street, New York.

## Wrecked the English.

One of the best anecdotes related of the late Henry Ward Beecher is the one told by an old friend who was with him when it happened. Dr. Beecher, always a friend of the poor, was at one time greatly interested in the class of restaurants patronized by the lowest working classes of Brooklyn. One day he suggested that this friend accompany him on a tour of a few restaurants on Lawrence street. They walked into one place familiarly known as "Mike's," and while waiting for the lone waiter to take their order, heard him give such orders to the cook as "Ham and ——," "Sinkers and cow," etc. Dr. Beecher's eyes twinkled as he said to his companion:

"Watch me faze that waiter with an order which I believe he won't abbreviate."

Up hustled the waiter with a "What'l yer have gents?" to which the Reverend Doctor replied without a smile:

"Poached eggs on toast for two, with the yokes broken."

The Lord High Executioner of English at "Mike's" walked to the end of the room and yelled:

"Adam and Eve on a raft. Wreck 'em."

It is related that Dr. Beecher nearly fainted.—CHARLES J. GASS.

## Very Probably.

Tom Reed, whose death has just occurred, was rarely, if ever, excited. One day Martin, who was a particularly nervous man, stood near the Speaker's chair cutting a plug of very rank tobacco with a pocketknife.

Martin became aroused at a ruling and waved the plug of tobacco up at the Speaker, shouting:

"This is damnable, sir!"

"It looks it," replied Reed.

MADELINE REILLY.

## The Discipline Broke Down.

Mahmoud Pasha was a progressive Turk of the new school. He was sent to St. Petersburg on a special mission, where, owing to his good manners and childlike ingeniousness, he soon became popular in diplomatic circles. He caught eagerly at new ideas, and was always discussing the possibility of introducing reform into Turkey.

One day the Turk was at luncheon at the quarters of a Russian officer named Birnedoff. The conversation had turned on the splendid discipline to be found in every branch of the Russian service. Birnedoff suddenly rang a bell.

"I am going to show you how methodical my orderly is," said he to Mahmoud Pasha.

A trim-looking young officer entered the room, saluted, and waited. Birnedoff gave him a key and told him to go to his office and get a certain bunch of papers.

The man saluted and left the room. Birnedoff took out his watch. Keeping his eyes fixed on the dial, he said, "He is going down the stairs; he is in the street." And then, after a long pause, "He has reached the war office; he is going up-stairs; he has entered my

Nott, which proves either that the shot shot at Nott was not shot, or that Nott was Shott notwithstanding. Circumstantial evidence is not always good.

It may be made to appear on trial that the shot Shott shot shot Nott, or, as accidents are frequent with firearms, it may be possible that the shot Shott shot shot Shott, when the whole affair would resolve itself into its original elements, and Shott would be shot and Nott would be not.

We think, however, that the shot Shott shot shot not Shott but Nott; anyway it is hard to tell who was shot and who was not.—Selected from The Author's Magazine by J. Stephen.

### It Depends!

In an old family graveyard about five miles from Fayetteville, Lincoln, County, Tenn;, there appears an inscription on one of the tombstones, in which the deceased admonishes those who pass by to live a better life, in the following language:

"Remember man, as you pass by,
As you are now so was I;
As I am now you're sure to be,
Prepare for death and follow me."

A stranger, not willing to follow the advice, without further information on the subject, wrote the following under the epitaph:

"To follow you I am not content
Until I know which way you went."

FRED C. GILL.

### It Was Irish—and Green!

The Cincinnati Inquirer tells the story of the experience of one of its friends who usually takes a constitutional each morning, and not long since noticed that the upper parts of the telephone poles in the vicinity of his residence were being decorated with coats of vivid green paint.

One morning, as he was passing one of the poles, an Irishman, seated on top, carelessly let drop a can of the green paint.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It struck the sidewalk, and was liberally spattered about. None of it, however, by exceeding good luck, besmirched the immaculate trousers of Mr. Stuart.

A moment later another Irishman appeared on the scene, and, noticing the green paint spilled all over the sidewalk, looked up and anxiously inquired of his comrade aloft:

"Doherty, Doherty, hav' ye had a hemorrhage?"—Selected by Miss Morris.

## Bathing Every Day in the Year.

"If all the easy marks were suddenly killed off," said a Washington woman who has just returned from California, "there wouldn't be anybody left but advertisement writers to bury them. I'd be one of the first to die, for I'm by nature as easy as elevens in the multiplication table. I simply can't persuade myself that everything I see in print isn't absolutely true. For two years I have been lured on by a page in the back of the magazines which sets forth the delights of a huge winter resort in Southern California. The line: 'Bathing every day in the year,' has haunted me. I pictured an eternally sunny strand caressed by the surf of an ever-smiling sea, and when I was in California I made it a point to go to that ideal spot.

"I found, to be sure, an amazingly big hotel, but the sky was gray, the sea stormy, and I had to have the steam turned on in my room before I could thaw out enough to take off my wraps. Sea bathing at such a temperature was madness, and I recognized the fact that I had been deceived by those magazine advertisements. I stayed three days, and each of those days was colder than the other two put together. When I went to pay my bill, I thought the time ripe to express myself to the clerk.

"'I understand from your advertisement,' said I to him with my most crushing manner, 'that people bathe here every day of the year'

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"I might just as well have tried to tip the Monument over with the breeze from a palm-leaf fan. The clerk didn't move a muscle.

"'People do bathe here every day,' said he. 'It's quite common. There are bath rooms on every floor.'"—Selected by E. L. Bostwick from The Washington Post.

---

## He Knew.

An eminent American lawyer, now deceased, was sadly given to intoxication. On one occasion he entered a church while a minister was holding forth on the future punishment of the wicked.

Fixing his eye upon the lawyer, who was reeling near the door, the preacher exclaimed:

'There stands a sinner against whom I shall bear witness in the day of judgment."

At this the lawyer folded his arms, planted himself as firmly as he could, and, addressing the man in the pulpit, electrified the whole congregation after this fashion:

"Sir, I have been practising in the criminal courts for twenty years, and I have always found that the greatest rascal is the first to give State's evidence."—Selected by Miss Morris.

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APRIL MAY JUNE

1903

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# SATSI MAKURI: A Japanese Episode, by Hamilton Greyson, M. & C. E. Illustrations by Edward Mayer*

IMMEDIATELY under the shadow of the Holy Fuji-ama and on the shore of the Lake Chuzenji-Nikko, lies the village of Moji, with its toy houses and little gardens of shrubs and bushes which are trained to grow like poodles, goats, cats, and dragons, and the beautiful chrysanthemum flower, whose fragrance fills the air of all Niphon.

Here lived, in one of the little streets close to the water, in a very, very tiny house, old Makuri the fisherman and his little daughter, Satsi Makuri—a pretty maiden of sixteen years. Satsi was now mother-housekeeper for old Matsu, for the woman of his side—the great mother—was lying in the grounds of the Shinto temple, which is close by to all Japanese villages, awaiting Shinto's call.

*Written for Short Stories.

In peace, the people of this fisher village lived, with no more excitement or noise than the shouts of the village fishermen, or the singing of its maidens.

Matsu had always been a silent man, but one day above all others, when he had just returned from casting his nets, he spoke so excitedly when he entered his house as to cause Satsi to quickly rise from her mat and to cry out:

"Honored father, what troubles you to-day?"

"My little flower," spoke old Matsu, "I hear from the Shira people, who came a long way to put their nets in Chuzenji, for fish, that some yens away in the mountains a great monster makes terrible noises, and that the foreign devils brought it from over the waters, and they are making a great road of metal logs from N'gasaki even to our village! May the Great Dragon destroy them if they break our peace!"

"Honored father," said Satsi, in a soothing way, "let us hope it is not true. For what should we need a great road, and a noise, to jar the earth over our poor mother, who must quietly lie till Shinto and Buddha bring her to rest, in the Holy Fuji?"

"O little flower, I know not; I know not," and the old man set out to talk with the men of the village of this great thing he had heard.

Time sped away, and once in a while the fisher folk heard far away in the mountains the strange noises of the monster. It came day by day closer and closer, and the simple fishermen clustered about old Matsu, whom they reverenced as the oldest man in the village, to know his views, but the old man was silent, and only shook his hoary head when questioned.

The days sped on into weeks and months. Old Matsu saw his "little flower" changing into a woman of great beauty.

He silently looked about for a man who should be a husband to his child, for he said to himself, "I grow old; soon I shall be down by the woman of my side, and wait for Shinto's time. I will not desire to have Satsi Makuri left alone." Thus Matsu daily cast his eyes about and watched for the most likely of the fisher lads, whom he might make a husband for Satsi, while in the tiny house Satsi sang her simple songs and made ready the tea and meals for her father, little knowing of her father's views.

One day there came into the village of Moji a white foreign devil. His hair was like spun "oshi," and his eyes like the waters of Chuzenji (so spake Satsi one day). This white stranger had a curious machine, which he set upon three legs on the ground and peeped through, and upon which the fisher folk looked with amazement. He was just outside the little garden of Matsu, who with Satsi was watching—like the rest—this white stranger, through the little wicker door of his house.

Presently the stranger glanced up and met the eyes of Matsu and his daughter. He smiled and bowed toward them, and Matsu returned the salute, while the girl withdrew, Then Matsu came out. He was surprised to find that the white stranger could speak some little of his tongue, and it pleased the old fisherman. Then with true Japanese hospitality the stranger was invited to take off his shoes and enter the house. On entering he saw the girl Satsi, blushing behind a mat door, and he wondered at the great beauty of this fisherman's daughter.

"This is my child," said old Matsu, "and her mother lies in the Shinto ground out there." The white stranger acknowledged with a bow the introduction. He was too astonished to speak at the sight of the wonderful beauty of the girl, this daughter of a poor fisherman. Tea was offered the stranger, and as he drank he gazed at the beautiful girl, and his astonishment increased at the extreme grace of this fisher maiden. He rendered his thanks and told Matsu that he was an English engineer, on the new great road, that the monster which made such noise was a cart to pull other carts, and that he should be glad to come again. Matsu said "Come." The white stranger went away, and the glance he gave to Satsi as he left the door excited her greatly, and brought the hot blood to her olive cheeks. She had never before seen so fair a man, with such eyes and hair like the spun oshi in color.

After this the white stranger came often to the village of Moji, and to the house of the fisherman Matsu—oftener when the fisherman was absent. In these visits he professed great love for Satsi, and the innocent maid, who returned his ardent caresses, feared nothing, but loved him in return.

One day she, blushing rosy red, told her father that the white stranger wanted her to wife. Old Matsu was delighted and in his Japanese way caressed his daughter. . For Satsi

to have a white man as husband, one who, no doubt, had much silver yen! This was luck, and he gave to the Shinto temple his finest catch, that day, and ceased looking about among the fisher lads for a man for Satsi. So it was decided that on one of the bright days in the month of Umuri, Satsi would be a wife, and a feast would be made, and the fishermen in all the village should share it, and all the village people wondered.

One day another white foreign devil rode into Moji. By chance he stopped in front of the house of Matsu. Again old Matsu—now used to the white strangers—came out, and greeted him. He, too, could speak some of the Japanese tongue. How very pleased was the old fisherman. This white stranger kindly refused Matsu's invitation to enter. He said he was only looking about at the beauty of the Chuzenji.

"Did the honored stranger know of another honorable white stranger who did curious things with a machine on three legs? A man as tall as a young bamboo, with eyes like blue water, and hair the color of oshi?"

The white stranger glanced up, surprised, as he answered, "Yes, I know such a man. He is an engineer, and his name is Jackson."

"Oh! yes, yes, the name was right; and he had asked me for my daughter, Satsi, and he will soon make her his wife—"

"Wife?" said the stranger. "Your daughter? Why this man has a wife and children in England!"

"No! No! that could never be; he was too noble. The stranger must forgive, but he was mistaken. Would it not be an honor to a poor fisherman's child?"

"Mistaken? No! There is only one man of that description with me. He has a wife and young ones—many of them, too."

The old fisherman insisted he must be wrong. The stranger, who was the chief engineer of the new railway, was in a quandary. He was justly angry. If this old man told the truth, Jackson was a scoundrel. Finally he said: "Old man, this white stranger cannot marry your daughter; he is already married. I will go now to talk with him, to tell him he is a fool." And he rode quickly away after bidding the old man farewell.

As Matsu's old eyes followed his movement away from the village, he mused. He was deeply troubled. Was this so? His eyes sought the ground. Had his little flower heard this stranger? He looked about for her. Close by his side she stood, with a curious light in her eyes. She led her dazed old father into the house.

"Honored father, do not be troubled. I heard all the white stranger told. This lover of mine has another woman and young ones. He has caressed me, and left his love upon my heart. I am not your 'little flower' any longer. I am now a woman. He, the white foreign devil, shall pay me a price.

Yes, a price.—a taste of the tolo shall he have for the wrong he has done. For this, he shall never again know his own. He shall see how a daughter of Shinto—how the natural daughter of a fisherman—will avenge herself."

And Matsu, being a Japanese was pleased. It was always so with the Japanese: for a revenge, for one who was false—the tolo—that was a sure revenge.

The chief engineer had ridden quickly to camp, but he did not find Jackson, who had gone another way, and was even then in the village of Moji. So he said, "I will wait, and when he comes, I will discharge the rascal, and send him home."

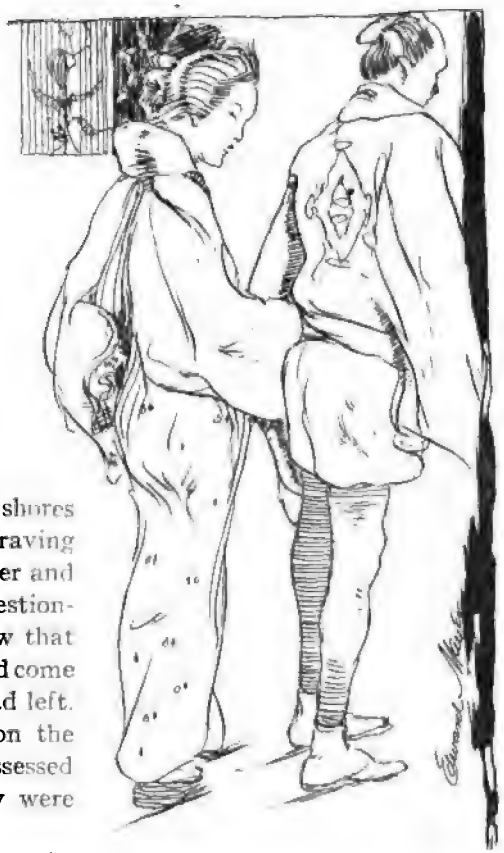
When Jackson arrived at Moji it was late, and the little rush lights had been lighted in the little house where Satsi received him with her great black eyes aglow with a queer light, and her olive cheeks crimson with excitement. Jackson was elated. Satsi had never been more beautiful than to-night. He saw. as he thought, evidences of her great love for him. He had no compunctions of conscience. He meant to win her.

Satsi brought him the tea, in two tiny cups. She was dressed in the gayest of kimonos, and her eyes scintillated with a feverish glow. When Jackson—all smiles of exultation at his conquest of this fair girl—had drained his cup to the very last drop, Satsi leaped from her seat on the mat. She was now a veritable tigress. She hissed as she placed her face close to his: "Traitor, I have given you tolo. Know you it? Have you heard its virtues?"

A deadly faintness began to come upon Jackson. He tried to speak, but could not. "You will not come again with your

black lies to caress and destroy me; nor will you ever see your woman and young ones," she hissed. "You shall never again know them or me!" and as Jackson in agony rolled from his mat to the floor, Satsi Makuri straightened up and stood gloating over his prostrate body.

Old Matsu had stood by, silent until Satsi said: "Honored father, it is done. He has the tolo. I am now revenged!" and old Matsu put his hand on her head and said: "It is well, my daughter. So will there be revenge for the virtue of this house. May the Dragon destroy all the white devils!"



Two days passed without the return of Jackson to the railway camp. The chief engineer sent out a search party. He was found on the shores of the Chuzenji, a raving lunatic. The old fisher and his daughter were questioned. They only knew that the white stranger had come to their house and had left. They had seen him on the lake shore, since, possessed by a devil, and they were afraid.

In the asylum for the insane at N'gasaki there is a white-haired Englishman, who raves continually. Every Japanese knows that he has taken the tolo, the root of which kills, and the flowers of which destroy the mind and make insanity, and they know it is a woman's vengeance; but they do not know it is the work of the once beautiful Satsi.

Satsi lives still in the tiny house in Moji, but Matsu has

joined the woman of his side in Shinto land. Satsi is no longer the "little flower," but a stalwart fisherwoman, who once a year paddles her sampan around the headlands to N'gasaki, where she sells her salted fish, buys twine for her nets, goes to the asylum for the insane, looks upon a raving white-haired Englishman in the window, and paddles again to Moji.

No man has ever come into her house to marry her. She will have no man. Her heart is with the white-haired man in the asylum at N'gasaki, whose eyes were once blue like the waters of Chuzenji, and whose hair was like spun oshi.

# FATA MORGANA: A Bookworm's Story, by Aldis Dunbar. Illustrations by Louise B. Mansfield*

I SHOULD have seen. Through life I had trained myself to notice, and to listen—subconsciously—to that which was spoken near me—not from curiosity about people, but because a chance word often helped me to clear up meanings and derivations as yet indistinct. But in this event all my observations went for nothing. I, Giovanni della Rovere, was blind, and heard naught, when a little sensible curiosity would have availed much.

For uncounted years, each like the one counted before it, I taught the History of Language in a German university town. For bread's sake I brought the most enthralling pursuit known

*Written for Short Stories.

to man down to the level of raw, awkward striplings, scarce one of whom cared to grasp the first delicate process by which an obscure root was fostered and shown to give life to strong, vital words, while ever I longed for freedom to give myself to knowledge for its own sake.

I say years uncounted, for when word came to me from the south of Spain that my sister, Lucia Falcone, had followed her husband in death as in life, for the first time I realized that she had been old enough to leave a daughter—about to be married. I was named guardian. A small annual income was mine in case I accepted the trust.

"Gloria will not burden you with responsibility," ran the last letter of my little Lucia. "She is well cared for by my old friends, with whom I have lived since Luigi died. She is betrothed, with my consent, to Richard Fabian, an American gentleman, and may not return to Italy until the time comes for her marriage. All I wish is to feel assured that in case misfortune touches her, she will have the right to turn to you, Niño. The few scudi I leave you are a slight gift, but let them add some little comfort to your life, or buy some books that you desire."

Could I refuse? Santa Maria! I saw the door of my prison opening wide.

I wrote at once to my niece, and signed such papers as were presented to me. I remember noting an odd legal phrase in one of the Spanish documents, which, on being traced back, gave me some valuable data. Then I packed together my papers and books, and made my way home to Italy, promising myself never again to leave it.

Small as was the sum on which I meant to exist, it sufficed for my needs. It gave me unquestioned right to a roomy garret under the eaves of a tall house, far out on the Via Ferrata,—a scaldino for warmth's sake, when the winds were bitter,—a pocketful of chestnuts or a plate of macaroni when I could lay work aside to eat. At other times there was always bread, with sometimes a flask of wine.

I needed no closets—no shelves. Space was plenty, and my parchments could lie strewn over the floor with none to disarrange them, so I wrote and studied in undisturbed peace. The one interruption to be lived past—the approaching marriage of my niece—would be brief, and after it was over I planned to take up my great work on the Evolution of Idiom.

But who knows where we shall end? One day, passing through a dark side street, I chanced on a book-stall, where lay—open in my sight—a volume for which I had longed in vain, Emilio Marcello's fine work on "Variations of Dialect," —a veritable mine of wealth regarding Sicily and Corsica. No reprint was it, but the authentic third edition, with the complete index omitted from the previous issues!

I rushed up the four long flights of stairs to my room. My last copper had been spent for ink, that morning, and no more would come for three days,—so I snatched up the first article that could be forced to serve my turn, and ran down again fearing that another might forestall me, and secure the treasure.

Per Bacco, I had trouble to appear indifferent; but the bargain was soon arranged, and I was up in my garret again, deep in the glorious yellow pages, before my breath was fairly my own.

I must have left the door unbarred, for my next memory is of a wrinkled brown hand—the terror of my childhood—interposed between my eyes and the faded letters. I started up and looked around.

"Assunta!" I cried. Truly, she was directly behind my chair.

"At your service, Sor Giovanni, when you are quite awake." She drew aside impatiently, revealing a slender figure in black.

"Perdio! Is it truly——" I began.

"I am Gloria Falcone," said the clear voice, with its soft falling inflection. It brought back to me the little sister who had loved to push away my book and lay her arm around my neck. I could believe that her hand was still in mine, had it not been for the eyes. Ah, the eyes! Wide apart and compelling, no word in my knowledge could express their strange charm—their dark magnetism. "Deep," say the Persians, "as the running river in the dark of a storm."

"You have come—*here?*" I asked, half bewildered; but Assunta gave me little time for questioning.

"Had you not a letter from the Signorina, saying all that was needful, and telling you when to meet us?" she demanded.

"A letter? A letter?" I tried to remember.

"*E vero.*" She clutched at something which lay, half covered by an old parchment, on the corner of my table. "It is here—and unopened. Eh, eh, Sor Giovanni!"

Seeing it, I recollected.

"Yes, yes. There was a postmark—Marseilles—beside the stamp, and it at once reminded me of a Provençal work at the library which I had intended to consult—so I went out in haste, and——"

"And never opened the letter. *Dio mio!* What a guardian for the Signorina! And the room is cold as an ice cave, Sor Giovanni. Have you no way of keeping warm?"

It was quite true. I was shivering—but from the excitement of having my mind taken from my work. I do not notice the cold when I am studying, so what use to put fresh coals in the scaldino? And then——

"There was a blanket," I said, "but I did not actually need it around me, so—I was afraid that some one else would secure this," I held up the coveted volume, "and Simone, the Jew, who keeps the book stall, was willing to exchange. He is less grasping than Stefanone, and really the book is worth much more than a worn blanket."

"I cannot doubt it," said Gloria. For the first time she smiled slightly, I know not why; but seeing her was like discovering a new language. Then Assunta again resumed her attack—being permitted by her mistress.

"You are to come with us at once, Signor Niño," she averred. "This is no place for you. The Signorina has taken the old Mariani villa, beyond the river, and you are to come there and live with us. Oh, none will prevent your studying your eyes blind over your ragged yellow books, but you will be looked after more carefully. But it is true that you are as much of a child as ever, and must be cared for!"

I must have turned white with astonishment, for Gloria moved quickly to my side, and put her arm around me.

"You will come, will you not, Zio Nino? I am very sadly alone, and I need you." The words were more than persuasive—they held a ring of finality. I made one effort.

"But I thought—" Assunta made a frantic sign to me for silence, and I understood at last that something had happened of which I was ignorant. I looked helplessly around my comfortable garret, where were no curtains to keep the light from one's pages—no cushioned chairs to tempt one to idleness—no tiresome carpet or rug to trip one up when the lamp failed for lack of oil, and the moon was hidden; then at my niece. There was that in her eyes which I could not resist.

"Yes, I will come," I finished. Assunta smiled grimly.

"I could have saved the signor the trouble of saying it," she remarked.

For the next hour it was as if the sirocco had beaten open

the windows, and whirled around to destroy. My precious parchments flew together into chests that appeared like magic, on the backs of two stout *contadine*. Assunta commanded,

directed, berated. I never realized how few were my possessions until I saw them disappear at her gesture.

Before my ideas righted themselves, I was drawn down the stairs—Gloria holding to my arm—and into a carriage; and at dusk I was installed in my rooms at the villa, as if I had been its master all my life.

At night, after we had eaten, Assunta led me aside, on pretense of asking my advice about some torn, leather-covered chairs in an ante-room.

"You still wonder what it means, Sor Giovanni. Let me tell you in a word, before she hears; and then I must not speak of it again. You would have known, had you read her letter. The Signor Fabian is dead, and she has turned to you in her loneliness. Be gentle to her, but never speak of America, or of anything American, in her presence. She made me swear to obey her in this. Wait, here is something I must show you."

She drew out a torn photograph and gave it to me. It was of a most striking face; not handsome, but strong and of a fine character, looking out at one with frank, courageous eyes; a face never to be forgotten.

"It is Richard Fabian?" I asked.

"Yes," she nodded. Then—"Santa Madonna!" In that instant Gloria was beside us—the picture in her hand. Slowly looking from one of us to the other, she broke it into tiny fragments and laid them on the brazier, where they blazed up, curling blackly. Then she left the room without a word. Assunta clutched my arm.

"You see, Sor Giovanni? She will not even say his name."

I saw. There was no need for Gloria to ask a promise from me. I recorded one in my heart.

From that time life went on very quietly. The villa was very old, and half ruined, but there were more rooms than twice our number could have occupied. A garden, with square-cut hedges of box and stained marble fountains, surrounded it, and was inclosed, in its turn, by a high wall, meant to protect it from flood; for the stream which ran so sluggishly beyond had been known to become an ungovernable torrent in early spring. Beyond it was a flat waste of land, uncultivated and desolate, with scanty vegetation, and no relief to the eye except a few stunted willows, and the far away blue shadow of the Euganean hills, seen dimly in the northeast. But Gloria kept the key to the low gate

which opened on the river bank, and in truth, none cared to pass out that way.

Old Assunta, wrinkled and gray, yet active as I had known her forty years before, was ruler of the domain. Two peasant maids and a half grown lad—gardener and coachman by turn—trembled before her. Her life long respect for the old name I bore saved me from actual commands; but she managed me for what she conceived was my own good, and I submitted to the inevitable.

Very different was her attitude toward my niece. It was not the deference due a child of the Della Rovere, for Lucia's marriage with Luigi Falcone had evoked her strong disapproval, as being a blemish on the family honor which could never be erased; but it was a feeling, not all affection, resulting from certain characteristics of Gloria's nature, seldom shown, but always felt by those who knew her.

Assunta was a little afraid, a little politic—more than a little guarded in showing her love for the young girl. Withal the spirit of the old woman, resenting unconsciously the imposition of silence on a subject of which she would dearly have loved to discourse, found outlet in a large show of authority; though a glance from Gloria was sufficient to alter any arrangement of which she wearied.

Perdio! But that old Assunta could cook! There was a certain Provençal dish of stuffed tomatoes—to which she added oil, drop by drop, as they attained perfection in their copper saucepan—that fully accounted to me for the beautiful words that star the language of Provence.

It grew into springtime. There was no flood that year, to sweep down the valley and destroy. Instead came promise of unusual heat. To me it mattered not at all. Through the day I sat in my cool apartment, making steady progress with my book. At sunset I joined Gloria in the *pergola*, and we chatted of music, verses, flowers—anything outside our real lives. What she did through the hours when I was alone, I never asked.

One day in early June Assunta came into my room, her great string of garnets around her neck—a black veil over her head. She was going to a *festa* in the village.

"There is to be a change," she whispered.

"Do we require change again?" I asked, laughing.

"Yes. I have known it long. Have you not seen how

she walks always up and down the paths without rest? No, you see nothing. You are blind as a bat in sunlight, when one takes you from your rusty folios. I say it is not well for a young girl—she is no more—to be shut up with the old, never speaking of her sorrow."

"Am I then so old, my poor Assunta?"

"You, Sor Giovanni? Well, perhaps not so old as I, for I nursed you when you were a *bambino*, but what do you see

of her? An hour at evening. No, she is right to have a companion. She has sent for a friend to be with her."

"So," I thought, "the retreat is coming to an end." But I judged wrongly.

Before another night a stir in the halls told of an arrival; and when Gloria joined me in the twilight, a dainty, fair-haired girl was at her side.

"Zio Giovanni, this is Angela Hay, my room-mate at the convent school in Paris." Then—as if reading the question

which suddenly formed in my mind: "She is English—English, *caro*. It is so many years that we have not seen each other—but she speaks our Italian. Ah, she was very good—*benissima* —when I was lonely in that chilly place."

"Was there ever a time when I could say 'no' to you?" laughed Signorina Angela. But Gloria went on:

"She is an artist, and has come to make some sketches of the villa for me."

I looked questioningly at the young girl, and she nodded. "Yes, I can paint what I see before me, nothing more. I have no originality of conception. When I try to imagine a scene or a figure—oh, it is quite hopeless, and I give it up."

"There is still time," I suggested. "That may develop later."

"I once thought so—when I was at the convent with Gloria —but on trying when I was far from her, I soon realized how impossible it was. Her will was all that upheld me."

"Wait. The power may return," said Gloria, leaving us and walking down the path between the tubs of rosy, blossoming oleanders.

"Is it not sad?" whispered Angela, looking after her wistfully.

"Yes, surely. Yet you may be able to help her as we cannot," I returned. "Did you ever see Signor Fabian?"

"No," she shook her head. "Gloria wrote twice of him, and then—the end came. She never mentions him?"

"Never. Do not, I beg of you, refer in any way to America, or anything American. Her one hope is in forgetting."

"Then I will do my best to interest her," said the English girl.

Truly, she spared no endeavor; and the improvement in Gloria was most visible. All day long the two were together —and Gloria could not breathe a wish without an answering effort to gratify it on the part of the little Angela. She was rather older than she looked, I found, and had never before been in Italy. Her expectation of it must have been a strange mingling of romance and poetry. But she took everything as a matter of course, from the tarnished gilt chandeliers and cracked mirrors in the *sala* to the oleanders in the *cortile* and the ox-carts that creaked by in the dusty road. It was Italy. All was accounted for in those three words.

I could not comprehend why Assunta seemed uneasy. I was now deep in the study of the mountain dialects, much assisted by half a dozen tattered pamphlets that I had unearthed in the house of Don Francesco, the village priest—and was, above all things, anxious to be undisturbed; but a score of times in the day Assunta would open my door, peer in, shake her head and wait to be addressed.

"What is it?" I would ask. "Do you seek the Signorina?"

"No, she is with the Signorina Angela, painting a picture outside the little gate, that nobody may see. The little foreigner cannot touch a brush without the presence of my mistress. One would believe that Signorina Gloria was herself the artist—and the other but the hand, moving at her will."

"What would you have, then?"

"Nothing, if you approve."

"Of course I approve, foolish old one. Can you not see how much happier is our Gloria since the Signorina Inglese arrived?"

Then Assunta, shaking her head again, would go slowly down the hall, muttering to herself. And I? I was forced to believe that she was jealous.

"How comes on the sketching?" I would ask, in the evening.

"Oh, *so* well. Italy is so beautiful," Angela would reply. "It is"—dropping her voice lest Gloria might hear—"like my dream of the South. Spain must be like your garden, Sor Giovanni."

I smiled at her innocent rapture, thinking of the flat, monotonous plain beyond the river, which she was painting to give pleasure to Gloria—and contrasting it with my memory of the luxuriant gardens of Granada, with their alluring charm, as I had seen them when visiting my sister, years before. I thought of them until I was impelled to search out some old Arabic parchments, and begin a new chapter with their aid.

"Are you painting any figures in your picture?" I once inquired.

"Not yet. If I could only imagine some lovely enough to harmonize with that scene! But there is time. I hope to persuade Gloria to pose for me. She would complete it. But then, she tells me that no one but herself will ever see it, so it may not matter."

The child grew eager—pale—as she spoke, and I drew her to talk of other things.

But afterward I took occasion to speak to Gloria alone.

"Is it well for Signorina Angela to become so absorbed in this work?" I asked. "She seems to be putting too much of her own vitality into so commonplace a scene."

Gloria gazed at me—troubled.

"Surely not, *caro*. I never allow her to paint unless at a time when I am with her. Indeed, I keep the gate locked so that she cannot pass out alone, and the canvas is shut in the pavilion. I watch over her most carefully, and often we pause to chat."

So I returned to my study, reassured. Soon I noticed a new expression in Angela's sweet face; dreamy—mystical triumph.

"I have begun on Gloria's figure," she confided to me. "She is seated on the marble bench—the one with a curved back, like a sea-shell—and her lace veil is over her shoulder. Do you know, I cannot imagine being able to paint as I wish unless she is by me. At night I almost forget what my picture s like. My thought of it is blurred. But when I am again sitting before it, I know that it is the best work of my life. I shall never equal it—if Gloria is not there to guide me."

Words, words. These were simply words to me, no more.

A week went by.

"Do you know, Sor Giovanni," said the English girl, one hot evening, "I would like to ask you something. I—I do not know how you will take it, but—Tell me, would you not think it a good thing if Gloria—if she *should* forget, and—begin to care for some one else?"

"The best thing in the world," I assented heartily, and the wistful face cleared. "Before many years pass I will arrange a good marriage for her."

"I did not mean exactly that," she said. "But—of course I do not speak of it to her. Nevertheless, I think—I think it will come."

I saw that she had some secret hidden in her heart, but would not have hinted at it—so let her leave me and join Gloria.

"She is better!" exclaimed Assunta, the next day. "My most beautiful Signorina! Listen then, Signor Nino. She has sent for riding horses from Pisa. Now will she consent

to go out into the world again, as do others. And how she will charm every one! Truly, when her swiftest glance, without even a word, bends us all to do what she desires—none who meet her will be able to resist her. One day she will be a Princessa Santa Maria! Nowhere can one find her equal." This last almost reluctantly.

Then, when another night had passed, Gloria came to me with an unaccustomed glow in her cheeks.

"The picture is finished, *caro*. I—I cannot tell you what it is to me. Oh, I feel that I must gallop far out over the plain to celebrate, now that my horse has arrived."

"And will Signorina Angela ride with you?"

"No, this day I must be alone," and she was gone like a flash.

Uneasy, I knew not why, I walked out into the ***cortile***,

where Angela was watching Assunta wash lettuce in the fountain.

"Has she gone?" asked the girl.

"Yes," I replied. "But why is she so elated?"

"The picture is finished," answered Angela, as though that reason were final.

"But——"

"And—she tells me that I have succeeded far beyond her wish, so I am glad, too. Sor Giovanni, I believe she has forgotten. I have always felt that her will was strong enough to prevail."

Assunta came toward us with wide open eyes.

"What talk is this of forgetting? She cannot forget. Did I not see her face when Ricardo Fabian lay dying?"

"But—" gasped Angela, drawing near me, as though for protection, "if—if she should have learned to know—to see some one, good and true? I have seen his face when he has been near her in the garden."

Assunta shrugged her shoulders incredulously.

"The child has seen Don Francesco. Altro! He is good and true, but he has no power to change the heart of a woman." And she returned to her salad.

"No! No!" whispered Angela. "It is not Don Francesco. You will know very soon, I am sure, Sor Giovanni."

Yes, an hour later, I knew—for the wild ride had ended in disaster, and Gloria Falcone, my little Gloria—ah, one may study words for a lifetime, yet have none in the end.

"And she was so glad," sobbed Angela, kneeling at her side.

"Glad? I *am* glad!" rang out the clear voice as never before. "Angela, bring—the picture—to me. I have been —silent—so long"

"It is outside the gate, in the outer garden," breathed Angela. I did not comprehend, but Gloria's hand unclosed, and the old key fell to the floor. Angela caught it up and ran out, I following her and reaching her at the little gate in the wall.

"There is no other garden, dear child," I said. She looked at me in amazement. "Have you never seen it, Sor Giovanni?"

I shook my head.

"Look, then!" She flung the gate wide, then started and

turned to me with whitening lips, as the usual dull landscape met our sight.

"Sor Giovanni!" she cried. "Tell me, tell me, what can it mean? Am I blind? This is not the place where I have worked with Gloria. See, here is my picture."

The easel stood in the shelter of the wall. On it was a large canvas, with a scene—was it Moorish? No, it was a garden of Spain. Flowering shrubs, tall trees—leaned over a white marble seat. Beyond was a glint of delicate lattice work—a Moorish archway. Everywhere was green luxuriance. On the bench sat two figures. One—with lace falling around her—was Gloria. The other? Could I ever mistake the strong, frank face? It was that of the torn—burned photograph.

"Day after day I sat here, near this gate, painting for her," gasped Angela, with hurried breath, trying to tell me all. "I never came except with her. When I grew discouraged she looked into my eyes, and I saw more clearly than ever before. Often she walked in the paths, *there*—oh, *there?* Then, she let me paint her. After a time she was no longer alone. *He*—was walking and sitting beside her. She was so happy that she was willing to let me put him in, too. Yet until to-day I felt sure of nothing unless she was close to me. What does it mean? Tell me! Sor Giovanni, *this* was before me all those days," pointing to the unreclaimed waste beyond the sluggish river, "yet here—*here* is what I saw—what I painted. It was Italy, to me." Her hand trembled as I laid mine on it.

"And—Sor Giovanni, who—who is *he?*" Her voice died away.

But Gloria Falcone, who might have told her, was with Richard Fabian at last.

# THE Jack-of-all-Trades: A Story of Sardinian Peasant Life, by Grazia Deledda. Translated from the Italian by Florence MacIntyre Tyson*

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IN a hollow of Mount Bacchitta, under a crown of huge granite rocks, which sheltered it from the bitter winds of the north, stood the cottage of Sidru Addas, a swineherd. His pens were enclosed with hedges and close by stood his solitary cottage, with its deep shelving roof of stones and boughs. A great, white dog, with an enormous head and gleaming red eyes, fastened by a chain to a rock, sheltered by overhanging branches, watched over the pens.

The view was sublime: it was a veritable kingdom of rock, intersected at rare intervals with a cluster of oak-trees, and with tiny sloping meadows, that in spring were thick with daffodils. At its foot lay Sardinia, stretching in all its marvelous loveliness to the sea, deep blue in the peaceful, autumn morning, to the misty horizon, bounded by walls of mountains, bathed in rosy light by the rising and the setting sun. When the wind hushed, a wonderful, strange silence fell upon those colossal, sharply cut, hoary, mysterious rocks.

Scattered through the distant woods, or in summer, on the slopes, covered with great clusters of asphodel, half green, half white, the swine rarely saw one another, and still less the swineherd.

Only the great, white dog, looking like some monstrous idol, with red eyes fixed on the distant horizon, seemed alive in this solitary wilderness. Some cork beehives were placed with their backs to the rocks, and from them, in the beginning of summer, Zio Sidru would take bitter honey.

*Translated for Short Stories.

He descended into the country beneath only at extremely rare intervals, although he possessed a little house with a garden in front, shadowed by a pomegranate and a grape-vine: his daughter Sidra climbed almost every week to the pens, bringing food and wine and changes of clothing. She often lingered a while and frequently passed the night up there, coming and returning quite alone, for every corner of the mountain was familiar to her. She was no longer young, was fat and brown, with great, flashing eyes; her feet were large and her hands strong, and since she feared no one, she was never frightened at anything that could happen in the natural course of events. But she stood in mortal terror of the dead. One afternoon, when she was quite alone in the little cottage, she heard a strange, continuous noise, which seemed to come from above, from below, from afar, like the blows of an axe on rock.

A stone-cutter at this height? Oh, such a thing was quite impossible. It was silly to think of it, for such a thing had never happened! Perchance it might be some unhappy spirit that was beating its wings of metal against the rocks in a frantic effort to escape.

Sidra stepped into the open. It was a balmy, fragrant evening towards the end of winter. The air was permeated with a grateful warmth, a forerunner of spring; the rocks were warm, the earth gave out a rich fragrance, the sky arched deep blue to the azure sea, to the azure mountains beyond. In the great, sun-drenched silence, the noise of the beaten rock vibrated through the limpid air, repeated in turn by a thousand echoes.

Shading her eyes with her hands, Sidra looked about her in every direction, walking cautiously over the fresh damp sward, as she peered all around her, but she could find no trace of any one. The noise kept on the entire evening. Towards twilight a mine exploded, echoing through every nook and corner of the mountain, while the dog, full of apprehension, barked like a chained demon.

A little later Sidru made his appearance, surrounded by his droves of pigs, which were numerous enough, but not fat (it was a bad year for acorns); they came along grunting and rooting in the pathway.

"Wilt stay now?" asked Sidru, who had lighted the fire.

"Yes. Who is cutting stone on the mountain?"

"I have no idea. He must want something to do badly," replied her father, disdainfully.

He was a tall man, was Zio Sidru, tall and big, with long, black hair and beard. His countenance, impassible and deadly white, seemed cut from stone. He was silent and stern. It seemed as if the rocks among which he lived had entered into his very soul. If he spoke his voice was full of disdain. From the altitude in which he passed his life, and because after forty years of labor he was able to live in independence, he judged men with scorn.

"Who can that insane person be, who has climbed 'way up here to cut stone?" Sidra asked every now and then, as if talking to herself.

The swineherd was sitting near the fire; he neither moved nor spoke; only from time to time he would spit among the ashes.

Later in the evening, as Sidra was preparing supper, a step was heard together with a snatch of song, and as the dog barked wildly, a man stopped at the door of the cottage and bowed, saying:

"Good evening."

"Good evening. Was it you who have been cutting stone?" asked Sidra, sarcastically. "Come in."

"Yes, it was I—"

"Come in."

"I will not enter unless the old man bids me do so."

"Well, come in," said the swineherd, without moving, and again he spit. The man entered. He was in the flower of his youth, was short, beautiful as the moon. His skin was white as snow, while his brilliant shining eyes penetrated to the soul of him upon whom he fixed them.

"Why in the world are you cutting stone way up here? I said I thought it must be an insane man!" said Sidra.

But in spite of her mocking words, she smiled graciously, her eyes were shining, and one would have thought she had suddenly grown younger by six or eight years.

The young man sat down and turned towards Zio Sidru.

"Necessity, Zio Sidru, necessity. You, who have the wisdom of the eagle, tell me, is it madness to do what one must? Is it the part of foolishness or wisdom?"

"Of wisdom."

"Of wisdom! You are right, Zio Sidru. I am a hunter

by profession; very good. But one cannot live by hunting I have a trade for every finger," he continued, and opening his hand he counted on his fingers: "I am a stone-cutter, a wood-carver, a carpenter, a hunter—in a word—everything! I live well, Zio Sidru, I assure you, monstrous well."

Zio Sidru answered never a word: Sidra devoured the young man with her eyes. Suddenly he turned and gazed at her, while into his shining eyes came a look so intense as to make her blush violently; then resuming his former position, he continued to address the swineherd.

"I live well; the only thing I lack is a wife. Will you give me your daughter, Zio Sidru?"

"You must be stark crazy," said the girl laughingly.

Zio Sidru's only reply was a smile.

"What, you do not reply! You will not give her to me? If you will not give her to me, I will take her!"

"Madman, madman!" returned she, smiling deliciously. The father looked at her sternly, then said:

"Raffaele, hunter, if you wish to stay and have a mouthful with us, in peace, do so. But for the rest, you may go to the devil!"

"What! Look at the old stupid, who is not willing! Not willing! I bet he will be, before long!"

Zio Sidru continued to look at his daughter sternly, and she perceiving it, said to the young man:

"Be done, now. If you wish to stay to supper with us, very well; otherwise, do as you like."

Boele (Raffaelle) remained to supper, and drank without scruple almost all Zio Sidru's wine, after which he went off.

Father and daughter remained alone, and Sidra flitted about from one thing to another, in evident embarrassment and unrest.

"Do you suppose that young man was in earnest?" asked the swineherd.

"I do not know."

"Has he ever spoken to you so, before?"

"Never."

Zio Sidru sat in silence for some time, then spitting into the fire, continued:

"Very well, listen: you are no longer very young, and can distinguish between good and evil. I am, beyond all else, reasonable. If you want him, take him; but know first that

he is a good-for-nothing, a rascal. And you will be rich, and if you wait a while you will have everything you want. I have labored for forty years, but, understand, I have not worked for a good-for-nothing, a rascal, half hunter, half stone cutter! I have not sold the pigs this year, because they are not fat enough and because we do not need to sell them while they are thin. I will sell them next year, and we will have not less than a thousand scudi. Understand, lucky girl, a thousand scudi! Now do as you think best, only understand this fellow is perfectly worthless. I have spoken. I am reasonable."

He ceased, then turned towards his corner, with a face as stern and expressionless as that of a sphinx.

"Bah! what a sermon! You are mad to think such things!" replied his daughter, resentfully, though she was red to the roots of her hair. And holding herself erect and haughty, she stepped to the door of the cottage, and gazed into the tranquil, fathomless night.

Three months later she married Boele, who, according to his baptismal certificate, was full thirty-six, in spite of his youthful air. Zio Sidru continued to be, as he termed it, "reasonable," and neither offered any opposition, nor indeed made any remark, wrapping himself in his usual garment of absolute silence. The bridegroom's only possessions consisted of one shirt, a wretched jacket, and a gun.

They came to the mountain to take their wedding supper. The spring evening was drawing to its close; the kingdom of rock was hidden under a wealth of bloom, of wild roses and shining daffodils. Brilliant patches of broom flashed like sparks in the rays of the setting sun. And the sky above, arching over the huge boulders, covered with verdure, was pure as the sea, while the distant waters and the distant mountains shone like mother-of-pearl.

The nuptial feast in this altitude, amid all the glorious riot of spring, was somewhat solemn. A whole pig was roasted, and Sidru, putting on a mask and covering his hands with essence, took honey from one of the hives. The bees buzzed about in the sunshine—the dog snapped at one, which alighted on his ear. From out of her overflowing happiness, Sidra every now and then looked beseechingly at her father, but apparently he was utterly unaware of her glances, for he took

no sort of notice of them. Boele amused himself by singing, then got awfully drunk, and finally fell asleep. Flushing and embarrassed, Sidra looked into the impassible countenance of her father, but the latter said never a word. On their way home late in the evening, she said to her husband, who, white and staggering, was walking along:

"It was awful in thee to do as thou hast done to-day, in my father's presence, too, of all men."

"And what did I do?"

"What didst do? Thou darest ask me that, oh!"

"And why not, pray? I got drunk, to be sure! but wine is made for man."

"But in my father's presence!"

"Who is thy father? an old vulture! Very probably he got drunk when he was married. Thou art, then, afraid of him?"

"Yes——"

"Well, just be quiet, thou, and I will make him as gentle as a lamb. We will hold him in the hollow of our hands, understand?" continued Boele, as he reached out his hand and closed it tightly.

Sidra was silent and bowed her head humbly.

And, indeed, Boele kept his word. He settled down, shot partridges, and sent them to Nuoro; worked diligently as a maker of carts, then as a stone-cutter, but would drink up a month's wages in a day.

His wife supported him, but he treated her well, and to his father-in-law he showed affection, respect, and absolute obedience. In short, he ended by twisting around his finger that man of rock, who was feared throughout the countryside. So for a while everything went as smoothly as possible.

In the autumn Boele killed quite a number of martens, and said to his wife:

"I am going to Nuoro to sell these skins; with the proceeds I will buy some wood and open a shop on my return. Oh, thou wilt see we shall make money."

In fact, he acted with great discretion, sold the skins to advantage, and placed the money in a little shop. In less than a month he had made three carts, had sold them, and given the money to Sidra. Then he said:

"I am going again to Nuoro, to buy some more wood."

She, full of happiness at seeing him grow so steady, gave him all the money and said:

"That thou mayest be more comfortable, I will beg my father to give thee some more."

"That will be fine," returned Boele, his eyes shining with pleasure.

So one frosty November they climbed the mountain, and Zio Sidru gave them the money.

As long as she lived, Sidra could never forget that day; she was happier even than on her joyous wedding day. They stayed a day and a night with the old man and his herds. It was intensely cold; the wind raged wildly among the great rocks, and the gray horizon, the gray gulf, the gray mountain was wrapped in a gray fog. In the woods the swine rooted among the abundant acorns, growing visibly fatter with the passing of each day. Crowds of little pigs were born, with pink muzzles and delicate skins, and in order that the mothers might have good luck, Sidru placed a venerable relic at the door of the pens. It was made with a niche and a glass in front, fastened with two silver chains. The medallion was of black wood, and behind the glass could be seen queer figures of saints, with a Greek inscription, and little pieces of red wood that, according to the good peasants, were stained with the blood of San Giorgio.

After Zio Sidru had installed the relique, not a single pig was born dead; and every time he entered the pens, he made three times the sign of the cross.

Sidra prepared two or three delicious little pigs, fried them in oil and made ready for Boele's journey.

And so he went away, and his wife was all alone in the little stone house shaded by the pomegranate, which had turned a brilliant yellow under the gray autumnal sky; but delicious dreams for the future cheered her solitude. She waited eight, then ten, then fifteen days, but Boele did not return. Sidra grew white and her heart was heavy within her. A month passed and Boele sent no word of his whereabouts.

Zio Sidru sent constantly to ask if Boele had returned, and at last came down into the valley himself. He found Sidra more dead than alive; her face was inexpressibly sad. What could have happened to Boele? Perhaps he had been robbed and murdered! Could he have fallen into the river, or some accident have befallen him in the streets?

Father and daughter looked each other in the face sadly, but neither dared pronounce the fatal truth that was weighing down their souls.

"We must send to Nuoro; we must find out, we must discover the truth," said Sidra at last in despair.

"After a while, after a while; we do not want a scandal, nor to spread our disgrace throughout the neighborhood. I will go myself, or I will send," answered her father.

He secretly sent his foster-brother; then in order to divert her a little while he was waiting, he carried his daughter off with him to his mountain home and his pigs.

His messenger in the meanwhile was galloping along the highway, and gazing at the meadows, that green, cold, and covered with water, were shining in the sunshine.

"There will be poor pasture this year, poor pasture, indeed, I fear."

"Bring him back, alive or dead, dear comrade, by force, if necessary!"

"Ah, friend, I cannot risk my liberty, even for you! I will try to make him return, but more, dear friend, I may not do! The pasture will be very bad this year, very bad."

One evening, as twilight was falling, Zio Sidru and his daughter were standing near the fire in the little cottage. The silence was so intense as almost to be felt, and great clouds scudded over the darkening skies. Suddenly the dog began to bark fiercely and with persistence. Sidra felt her heart beat almost to suffocation, but she said not a word, and only stooped down, to conceal her agitation. As upon an ever-to-be-remembered evening in the long ago, a step made itself heard, then the figure of Boele appeared.

He looked drunken and worn. His face was black, his eyes weary.

He entered and fell upon the floor with a groan, like an animal about to die. "Kill me! cut me in pieces!" he said, spreading his arms on the floor. I am a wretch, a "good-for-nothing! I have drunk up everything to the last penny, all mine and all yours, all, all! Kill me, Father Sidru. Reach out your hand and plunge your dagger into my throat! Make way with me now, this very moment, before I have a chance to do worse!"

Zio Sidru drew himself up to his full height, gazed at the

figure crouching at his feet with ineffable disdain, then pronounced one word—"Wretch!"—and went out.

Sidra burst into tears and wept long and passionately over the wreck of her dreams.

Boele, with his face pressed against the floor, and arms wide spread, continued to rave; but at last his words and groans grew more confused and he finally sank into a restless sleep.

Then Sidra rose and examined his pockets and clothes; not a penny to be found. She wiped his burning forehead, put a bag under his head and resumed her weeping.

The next day, Boele burning with fever, seized forcibly the hand of Zio Sidru, kissed it and bathed it with tears.

"Either kill or forgive me, Father Sidru. I am a miserable wretch, so treat me as I deserve. I will be your herdsman; I will not go near my wife, but will remain here, your humble, obedient servant!"

And he continued to pour forth a torrent of promises of amendment and future good conduct. Zio Sidru was sensible and pardoned him.

They all resumed their former mode of life. Boele devoted himself to hunting; he climbed the loftiest mountain peaks in search of eagles; captured foxes, ravens, weazels, in a word, every sort of animal. He would return home in high spirits, and often Sidra heard him singing a little refrain that made her shudder with sad memories.

"Adieu, Nuoro, Adieu,
I now am going away,
And when I return again,
The dead will be alive."

"May God grant it may be so!" she would murmur.

Often Boele passed the night with the swineherd, watching over the pigs,which were now very fat and quite ready for sale.

Zio Sidru was expecting a buyer from the South, and should they not come to an understanding, he meant to take them himself to Cagliari. A great part of his fortune, of the labor of forty years, was in this herd of fat pigs.

"With the money," he thought, "I will buy a 'tanca' and will pass the rest of my days in peace."

The merchant arrived, but they did not strike a bargain. Then Zio Sidru decided to go himself, and Boele was to accompany him. They were to leave at dawn one morning

towards the end of February. Boele had gone on a hunting trip two days before.

He returned the evening before the day fixed for their departure, his eyes shining with excitement, his voice gay with laughter.

"Has not the man arrived who is to take care of the pens during our absence?" he asked.

"No, and I am very much worried, for three of my animals are missing and I would like him to go look for them."

"You go yourself, Father Sidru."

"But your eyes are shining like lanterns. You have been drinking and will go to sleep."

"I have not been drinking, and I will not go to sleep. Pray, go."

And Zio Sidru went. It was a windy night and the clouds were scudding over the sky but it was not at all dark. The moon rose, turning the clouds into glowing sliver, then appeared in all her glory, till every rock and wind-tossed leaf stood out in bold relief.

At some distance from the pens, Zio Sidru thought he had discovered the footprints of the three lost beasts, and also those of a man.

"Oh!" he exclaimed to himself, "some one has stolen them, then. But I will soon catch him, unmitigated rascal, that he is!"

And he followed the footprints, secure in the knowledge that Boele was watching over the herd at home.

Wandering first on one side, then on the other, Zio Sidru spent the whole night, but quite in vain. When the moon set the clouds became so black the swineherd could see nothing and so turned his face homeward. From afar, he could hear the dog barking furiously, awaking a thousand echoes among the hills. It seemed like the voice of some demon chained among the rocks, and Zio Sidru was seized with a sudden anxiety. He hastened his steps; every now and then the dog was silent, but only to renew with more violence his howls.

"He is calling me," said Zio Sidru to himself. "What can have happened up there? What can that miscreant, that crow-hunter, be doing?"

And he started off in a run; the wind cut sharply his chest, his legs, his hair; his heart began to beat violently. Breath-

lessly he reached the pens. They were empty, the pigs all gone, as well as Boele. The hoarse and fierce bark of the dog alone disturbed the solitude.

Zio Sidru gnawed his fingers as he ran around, beside himself with fear and anguish.

"He has robbed me, he has destroyed me! No wonder his eyes were shining and his face was red. He has been planning for a long time to rob and ruin me. The infamous wretch! He went this way as soon as I was far enough away, and now he is far, far away, this crow-hunter! He will sell my pigs, will drink up my labor, my life! He! A thousand times no! I will follow him, willl take his life, will place seven bullets in his heart, the miserable thief!"

Not even for a moment did Zio Sidru entertain the idea of denouncing Boele to the authorities. Ah, he felt himself equal to even this terrible occasion; capable of doing all that must be done, himself. And never a word of blame for Sidra, the first cause of all his misfortunes. He did not lose a moment more. A brilliant line of light separating the clouds from the horizon and the gulf of Orosei announced the approach of dawn. The wind had fallen and only the tops of the bushes waved their branches in the uncertain light. The cold was intense. Zio Sidru started on his way, met the man who was to take care of the pens and the few remaining beasts and asked him to procure a horse for a journey. He took the horse, desired the man to take the best possible care of everything, telling him that Boele had already gone ahead with the animals. Then he threw himself into the saddle and set forth. Arrived in front of the cottage, he drew rein. beat loudly with the butt of his gun on the door, and waited without dismounting. Sidra opened the door.

"Justice!" screamed Sidra, suddenly turning as white as a sheet.

"Do not scream, woman! The justice I shall administer myself!" said her father, striking his breast with his hand. "Now I am going, I shall take his life, crush him as I would a snake. Stay here quietly, and say no word to anyone."

"But wait—let me hear, father—tell me——"

He was already far away.

Sidra went in and closed the door. She was trembling all over, and her teeth were chattering violently. Death stood in her very presence.

# USHROOM Ketchup: The Story of a Country Shop, by Charles Fielding Marsh*

IT was about seven o'clock on a fifth of November evening, and a smell of burning brushwood, mingled with gunpowder, pervaded the village street. A thin blue smoke wreathed itself above the hollow in which the village stood: it was all that remained of a bonfire, a bonfire of small pretensions, but one that a few boys had talked about for weeks previously and had been so anxious to see blaze that they had lighted it before dusk, and as it had long ago become nothing but a heap of ashes they had now betaken themselves to the task of letting off a few feeble fireworks, to the annoyance of most of the old people in the street.

Round the window of the one shop the village possessed stood some half-dozen young scamps, bemoaning the failure of their pecuniary supplies and flattening their faces against the glass as they admired and longed for the few fireworks placed in such tempting prominence.

"Lor'! I'd like a bundle o' them there long uns with th' wax ends, or one o' them thick yaller uns with th' blue tops. Kippen, what ha' yer got left? Tree ha'pence, ha' yer! gude on yer, bor; dew yer ha' one o' them Cather*ine* wheels—they be right proper."

"Na," put in a second speaker, "dew yer ha' one o' them there long crackers as goes off forty times, and let's go and terrify owd Mother Hewitt."

The excitement increased as each boy in turn suggested how to lay out the money to the best and most brilliant advantage.

*From Longmans' Magazine.

A cart drew up in front of the shop, the steaming condition of the horse showing it had come a long distance.

"Can I hold yer hoss, sir?" cried most of the boys at once. "I arst fust, sir." "That he didn't; he be a liar, sir," was shouted in chorus.

"Oh! get out o' th' way tergether, dew," said the man. "I ain't agoin' ter stop; I'm only goin' ter leave my samples inside and then I'm goin' ter take out, so I don't want none of yer help."

There was a sudden silence, a silence of disappointment, for the boys had anticipated another copper to expend in pyrotechnic display.

Tinkle, tinkle, went the shop bell as the man opened the door.

"Gude even', Miss Julia. I'll just lay these here pattern-books on th' counter if yer don't mind, cos I want ter take my mare out and give her a feed o' corn and have a cup o' tea over at th' Swan, and afterwards I'll come in and take yer orders."

"Ah! all right, Mr. Forbes," said the girl addressed. "Stand 'em there; no one shall interfere on 'em. Thank ye, I'm pretty well, but mother, she be kinder middlin."

"Well! yer looken' real bonnika and more lovely than ever, dang me if yer ain't!" and Mr. Forbes cast an admiring glance in the girl's direction.

"S-sh, Charlie; don't ye prate on like that. Mother'll hear yer, and then there'll be no end o' sisserara. Dew yer go and get yer tea, and don't talk like a fuzzy fule."

The young man blew a kiss across the counter, and tinkle, tinkle, went the bell again as he closed the door behind him.

Mrs. Grimes kept one of those little general shops still to be found in many of the remoter villages of Norfolk. On a board over the door was written "Maria Grimes, Licensed Dealer in Tobacco," but from that it must not be concluded that tobacco was the only thing Maria Grimes sold: far from it, on looking round, the difficulty was to discover what Maria Grimes did not sell. Hanging from the low ceiling were bunches of hob-nailed boots of all sizes, tin pails, coils of linen line, lanterns and tallow candles, which brushed the hats of the customers as they entered the shop. Piled high on the counter were tins of lobster, various brands of salmon, American cheeses, pans of lard, pieces of bacon, loaves of bread, and tins

of biscuits. The shelves at the back of the counter were packed tight to the ceiling with rolls of red flannel, prints, broadcloth, and suits of boys' clothes, and in front of these were displayed to advantage girls' hats, trimmed with bright feathers, cheap flowers, and ribbons. In the window were rows of glass bottles, containing sweets of many kinds(mainly of the sticky order), pots of jam, a few cheap toys, the box containing the fireworks, lamps, a bag of marbles, and a few withered apples, the whole brightened by a colored advertisement of Someone's Cotton and Someone's Turret Tea. On the floor stood rows of black cooking utensils, coal scuttles and spades, stones for sharpening scythes, looking-glasses, and various odds and ends warranted to bark your shins as you moved about on a tour of inspection. Not that you could move far, for the place was so well stocked, so crowded, that it was difficult to turn round without knocking over something or other.

Maria Grimes was a wizened-up old lady, with a face furrowed and lined. She wore a red and black check shawl over her shoulders, and on her head an indescribable cross between a cap and a poke bonnet, made of black material. What other garments she wore no one could say with certainty, for her sphere of action lay mainly behind the counter, and being a short woman her head and shoulders only were visible. Her age must have been between sixty and seventy, and as Julia, her daughter, was barely nineteen, Mrs. Grimes, it must be concluded, had had her love affairs late in life. In every respect Julia was her mother's opposite: plump, tall, with blue eyes, bright fair hair, and red lips and cheeks, she was a decidedly pretty girl.

Mrs. Grimes served in the shop on Saturday nights and when there were more customers than Julia could attend to, but most of her time was spent in the little room behind the shop, to enter which you had to ascend two steps and pass through a door, into which a pane of glass had been inserted. This pane was covered on the inside with a red twill curtain which Mrs. Grimes could lift at will to observe Julia and her customers.

The shop had a perfume all its own, a blend of cheese and boots, tallow candles and paraffin oil. Sometimes the candles most violently assaulted your nasal organ; at other times the boots seemed to have it all their own way; but there is no doubt that everything in turn did its very best to attract

public notice to itself, as if to say, "Buy me; I am longing to get out of this."

Trade was very brisk this November evening, and Julia moved quickly up and down the counter, weighing, sorting, and measuring, making neat parcels of the most heterogeneous contents.

"Now, Mrs. Skipper, I'll tend' ter yer. With them there boys amaken' all that din and clutter inter street, fare ter me keepen' shop be right down perpleken' th' fifth o' November. What dew ye want?"

"A pound o' crushed sugar, please, Miss Julia," said the middle-aged woman, who had taken the only chair by the counter. "I'll ha' tew or t'ree o' them pork chops. Oh! fresh in ter day; that be proper. Tew ouncen o' tea; dew ye put a pinch o' green inter it—that dew seem ter draw th' flavor out o' t' other, that dew. Then I want six o' them farden candles——"

"They be tree a penny now," said Mrs. Grimes, appearing suddenly on the scene.

"Lor'! narthen' never dew come down," moaned Mrs. Skipper. "That dew seem shameful how dear things dew be agetten' for us poor folk."

"All I know is that it don't dew me any gude," said Mrs. Grimes. "I wish 't did; that make it wus for us shopkeepers."

"Then I want tew loaf o' bread and a yard and a half o' that there sarsnet ribbon, red, same as I had when I comed in a Tuesday. I think that'll be all ter-night, Mrs. Grimes. Yer'll order me half a stun o' best whites when th' miller call. Thank ye kindly."

Mrs. Skipper was just rising to go when the bell rang again and another lady—a tall, raw-boned woman, whose appearance was spoilt by a large wart over her left eye—entered the shop. Mrs. Skipper sat down again.

"What! a-doin' yer shoppen', Mrs. Skipper?" remarked the newcomer. "Yer fare ter ha' a great owd basketful; but there, as I say to my gude man, no one know 'cept those who ha' ter prowide for a family the 'mount o' all maunder things what's wanted."

"Ah! yer right, bor," replied Mrs. Skipper; "and ter hear my man talk when he hain't got th' wittles he kinder 'proves on, one 'ud think he give me an Inder o' money to shop with."

Mrs. Cook interjected that she allowed her man no fancies of

any sort, he just had to eat the "wittles" set before him. "I'll ha' a tin o' that there condensed milk, Mrs. Grimes."

"Dew yer like that there kind, Mrs. Cook?" asked Mrs. Grimes, as she wrapped the tin in paper.

"Well, there fare ter be a gude tidy drop o' substance in it. I ha' just weaned my youngest, and he fare ter take kindly ter it."

A small boy had entered the shop and was touching and playing with everything within his reach. Mrs. Grimes, with a "'Cuse me, Mrs. Cook, I'll tend ter this here boy afore I finish yer orders; I can't abide boys ajifling in my shop," turned her attention to the newcomer.

"Now, then, Harry Platten, what dew ye want?"

"Tree ha'purth o' gunpowder, please, mum."

"Goodness gracious alive! What next, pray? Ter ha' th' imperence ter come and arst for gunpowder at this time o' night! Hain't I told ye afore I 'ont sell gunpowder arter dark? Here, ha' one o' them bundles o' starlights."

"Dew they bang, mum?"

"Dew they bang? How should I know? Buy 'em, and then yer'll be able ter find out. Plague th' lad! make up yer mind, and dew keep yer hands off things." Harry expressed a desire for "tree ha'purth o' Chinee crackers." "All right; here yer be. I'll be thankful when all these here mucky things be cleared out. Never again dew I keep fireworks. That wor Miss Julia's notion, that wor. What with the license ter sell 'em, and th' thought o' bein' blowed up, and the shop full o' boys all day long, and half th' skule astaren' inter winder and agarmen' th' glass up with their fingers, and th' everlastin' bangin' inter street, that don't repay yer nohow. There, off yer go, Harry; and don't go asetten' off nigh my shop. I don't want ter be barnt in my bed."

"Yes, mum; thank ye, mum; gude night, mum"; and Harry opened the door. "Gude night tergether. Gude night, Mrs. Dumplin'-on-the-'ye Cook!"

The lady with the wart made a dash at the boy with her umbrella, but he had already put a safe distance between himself and the object of his ridicule. "There! ter be sure," she exclaimed. "I never did! Whatever are we acomen' tew? These boys are getten right outstreperous. Fare ter me no one can dew narthen' with their childer nowadays. This come o' forced edication, board skules, and all maunder o' such-like.

And what they don't know they larns off these here yachters as come about inter summertime."

"Yes, it be dreadful ter hear 'em. But, there! yer should keep a shop," sympathized Mrs. Grimes. "Yer'd hear summat then. It's right down disgraceful, as I told th' head teacher t'other day when she wor praten' on about th' wonnerful grant th' skule ha' arnt. I say, 'What about th' young warmin's manners?' Ah! that nonplussed her, that did. Well, gude night, Mrs. Cook, if yer must be agoin'." And as the shop was now empty Mrs. Grimes retired to the back room to lay the supper, so as to be ready to help her daughter when the traveler returned.

Soon the bell sounded again, and in walked Mr. Forbes. He looked agitated as he began to undo his bundle of goods and broke out:

"Look ye here, Julia, I'm sick o' this beaten'about th' bush. I ha' made up my mind, I ha', and I'm agoin' in ter talk straight ter th' owd lady. Why shouldn't we keep company, if we ha' a mind ter? What ha' th' owd lady got agen it I wants ter know? I ha' been traveler for Rankin's tew year, and I know a lot about business, I dew. Why, with a bit o' push and adver*tise*ment, I could double yer takens in no time. What yer want ter dew is ter lay yerself out for these here yachters. Look at th' trade they do with 'em at Wroxham. Why, if th' owd 'oman would let us get married, we'd put a big winder inter this here shop and dew a rum 'un. Why not ha' a board onter quay pointen' out the way up here, with 'Yachten' parties perwided for' on it? Can I go in and arst th' owd lady, Julia?"

"'Tain't no use," and Julia shook her head mournfully. "Mother, she 'on't hear o' me getten' married. She wor sayen' only yesterday she hated th' sight o' a man danglen' about th' house, and she never did fare ter think much o' ye. Yer'll only be upsetten' everything and amaken' o' things more onpleasant than they be now, and p'raps she'll say how she 'ont ha' yer call agen."

This was a possibility that had not suggested itself to the young man's mind.

"Howsomedever, dew yer dew what yer think proper," went on the girl. "Yer can go and see her if yer ha' the mind ter, but if that don't tarn out right don't ye say that be my fault."

"All right, Julia. They say narthen' wenture narthen' win; I ha' a mind ter go, and I be agoen"; and the young man lifted the flap of the counter and walked round to the door, on which he rapped. "Come in," was the answer; and, with already oozing courage, Mr. Forbes entered and wished Mrs. Grimes "Gude even'."

"Oh, it be yer, be it? Well, I never! I'll come inter shop, Mr. Forbes; I don't dew business in my keepen' room."

This was a bad start, and the young man felt himself at a disadvantage. Twisting and twirling his hat in his hand, he, much to the old lady's astonishment, closed the door behind him and began in faltering tones:

"'Tain't exactly business as I wanter see yer about, Mrs. Grimes—er—er—I should—er—ha' kept inter shop—er—and not ha' taken th' liberty ter come in here. But it wor—it wor —er—another matters I wanter ha' a say with ye about."

"Lawk a mussy me! what dew th' man want?" exclaimed Mrs. Grimes. "Dew get it out; don't stand huckerin' there. I ain't agoen' ter lend yer money, if that's what yer arter, so now yer know."

"Oh, no, thank ye, Mrs. Grimes, I don't want yer ter lend me no money. I wor about ter arst yer—arst yer—if yer'd make no objections ter my keeping company along o' yer daughter, Julia. I'm wery took with th' gal, and we wanter get wed, we dew."

"Well, there!" screamed Mrs. Grimes, "what fancies! Well, I never! A young jackanapes like ye astandin' there atellen' me a lot o' rubbage! What next? I should ha' thought as how yer'd ha' put me down ter have more sense than ter listen ter such notions. Here, Julia be only nineteen year come Easter; 'tain't likely she know her own mind, and I tell yer I ain't going ter let her start havin' a young man atrapezin' on her out a Sundays when she orter be in church, or a haven' a letter from a fule of a sweetheart, tarnen' her head and taken' her mind off her duties. 'Tain't so likely. And supposen' I wor duzzy fule enow ter let yer get married—not as how I 'tend ter, so mind yer that—how dew ye think o' liven', I should like ter know? A pretty kind o' husband yer'd make, out on yer rounds and asleepen' in public-housen from Monday morning ter Saturday night. A proper kind o' husband for a gal not yet twenty!"

As Mrs. Grimes was at last obliged to pause for breath, Forbes meekly ventured to explain that if he got married he thought of

giving up traveling and was prepared to assist his mother-in-law in the management of the shop. So dumbfounded was the old lady at this notion that in the silence she maintained the young man had an opportunity of giving his opinion of the desirability of enlarging the business as well as the shop-window. Mrs. Grimes's wrath knew no bounds.

"I like yer imperence, that I dew," she broke in. Then in tones of biting irony she added, "Yer be agoen'ter teach me ter keep shop; yer be most considerate and obliging, I must say. Forty year and more ha' I kept th' shop and how I ha' done it without th' help o' such as yer th' Lord in Heaven only know. Enlargen' th' winder, and apullen' th' house about my ears, and aspenden' o' my money—!" words failed her.

Forbes's information that he had fifty pounds put by which he thought would pay for the alterations quite failed of the desired effect.

"I 'on't ha' yer alterations, no, nor yer fifty pound; and as for praten' on about th' yachters, why I be right glad when th' summer be gone, I be. Th' yachters!" she added in tones of derision, "what gude dew ye ever get out o' them! I know 'em; hain't I time arter time this summer started five or six young sparks off on their business? There they be, asitten' on th' counter, ateasen' o' Julia, and keepen' honest folk out o' th' shop, till I hit on th' plan o' puttin' a tray o' them tarts on th' counter ter 'tract th' owd waps. They kept 'em pretty lively; some on 'em got stung pretty tid'ly, tew; that kept 'em from stoppen' and talken' and interrupten' my gal in her duties. Yer can keep yer yachters—I don't hold with 'em; and look ye here, Mr. Forbes, if I ha' any more o' this I'll write ter Rankin's and say they can either not ha' yer call agen', or put another traveler on th' round. So I wish ye a wery gude even' and thank ye for narthen'. No, we don't want narthen' ternight, so yer can take yer parcels along with yer."

Mrs. Grimes drove the discomfited traveler before her to the door, effectually frustrating his hopes of a few last words with the unhappy Julia.

For a day or two after the young man's dismissal the girl's relations to her mother were somewhat strained, for the old lady lost no opportunity of airing her sentiments as to the folly o' young mawthers acrazen' their heads about getten' wed, instead o' 'tending ter business. Forbes she insisted on styling "th' young jackanapes," and in violent terms she de-

nounced "th' imperence o' th' man acomen' inter my room without so much as a 'by yer leave, and arsten' for my daughter like as though she wor a bar o' motley soap. I'll ha' no more on it. I'll 'tend ter travelers myself. Yer not ter be trusted, that's a sure moral," she informed her daughter so often that Julia became impressed with the heinousness of her conduct and went about her work with so settled an air of melancholy that her altered appearance evoked much comment in the village.

"I wonder what ail th' mawther," Mrs. Skipper remarked to her neighbor, Mrs. Cook, as they swept their respective doorsteps. "She seem right tethy, she dew, and fare ter look kinder sheeped about summat."

"Yes," replied Mrs. Cook, "I went inter shop t' morning ter get a bit o' lard and she fared kinder afeared ter talk, and Julia wor allus fit for a bit of a mardle. I wonder what ha' come ter th' gal. She hain't got no constitution, I know, and Mrs. Grimes she dew put upon her so. There she be, all day long, shut up in th' shop, and never get out 'cept Sundays, and then only 'lowed as far as th' church and back agen."

So passed a week of deep depression, for Julia was ever picturing in her mind's eye her lover's hopeless look of despair as he was swept from the shop by the torrent of her mother's invective, and all the world looked very black. She was staring aimlessly out of the window one afternoon between the tins of corned beef and bottles of pickles when she noticed a stranger stop in front of the shop, look up at the name on the board, and then, after a little hesitation, open the door and come in. The man was flashily dressed in a somewhat shiny black coat, blue trousers, and a flaring red tie, and he wore a bright-colored dahlia in his button-hole. He greeted Julia with a profound bow, which expressed admiration of so much beauty behind a counter.

"Good afternoon, miss; most seasonable weather for th' time o' year, miss. I believe I am right in thinking this is Mrs. Grimes's. Possibly I'm speakin' to Miss Grimes," Julia bowed assent. "I came to see if I could procure hany mushroom ketchup."

Julia believed there was some somewhere, but after a fruitless search was obliged to call her mother, who produced a bottle from a remote corner of the shop.

"There ain't much call for these here sauces; folk fare ter

clear up their wittles without wanten' of a relish," said Mrs. Grimes, as she wrapped the bottle in paper and handed it across the counter. "Tew shillen', if yer please."

The young man made complimentary remarks on the healthiness of the neighborhood in such eloquent language that Julia decided he must be a "London gent." "But I wants several dozen o' this 'ere stuff," he added, as he laid a florin on the counter.

"Why, what in th' name o' wonder dew yer want with sev'ral dozens?" cried Mrs. Grimes.

"Well, it's like this, missus. My master, Mr. Smithers—his wally, mum"—and the young man bowed as he introduced himself into the story. "My master 'as taken the shooten' at the 'all and is staying at the Ferry Hinn. 'E's one of them London swells, and fond o' 'is bottle of champagne. Well! this 'ere stuff is pertikelar good when 'e's got a mouth on in the mornin'. 'E passed through 'ere last summer and bought a bottle of this ketchup of yours, and the comfort it has been to the pore gentleman I can't tell you. So says 'e to me, "Do you go and git three dozen from where the other came from," and I came off to you straightaway."

"Tree dozen, goodness me! he must be main fond on it, ter be sure. I wish I had some more, but that be all I ha' got. Maybe, Julia, as how th' chap's as make it may call round this way afore long, and then, sir, I'll remember o' ye."

"Well, just send it down to the Ferry—'Mr. Smithers, Ferry Hinn'—of course we shouldn't mind paying a little extra for your trouble," said the stranger, with extreme affability.

"Th' man as make it live out Barton way; fare ter me he be sure ter call afore long—he allus call oncet in th' season, don't he, Julia?"

"Well! think of us; we shall be 'ere, on and off, the whole winter through. 'Tis a queer little 'ole this place, mum—not much push about it, so to speak; it makes it quite pleasant to 'ave a chat with real business people like yerselves; you see I'm used to business people in London, and I seem kind of at home with 'em when I meets 'em. Good day."

"That," said Mrs. Grimes pointedly, as the door closed behind the stranger, "is what I call a wery perlite young man. He know a business woman when he see her, though she don't waste no money on largen' th' winder or advertizen' th' goods.

If yer see them ketchup people pass down th' street dew yer run out and stop 'em, Julia."

By a fortunate chance who should walk into the shop the next morning but a man wearing a white apron and carrying a big basket on his arm.

"Dew you want any ketchup, home made?" he inquired, as he set down the basket on the counter.

"Well, there now," said Julia, "that dew be a coincident, ter be sure! Here, mother, here be th' wery thing we wants." Mrs. Grimes bustled into the shop.

"Ter think on it now, just inter wery nick o' time, as one might say. But yer bain't th' man from Barton?" said the old lady, as she critically examined the new-comer.

"I come from th' City, but it be the Barton recete right enough. Mushrooms were that plentiful t' year there be many a man a-gone inter th' ketchup-trade."

"Well, I want tree dozen," said Mrs. Grimes, beaming at the magnitude of her order.

"Can't dew it, mum, nigh sold out; can let yer have tew dozen, that's all I ha' got onter cart, but I'll be round agen shortly and can bring yer another dozen."

"And what be yer asken' for th' tew dozen. Twenty-four shillen'? That be tew much. I'll give yer a pound."

After much haggling twenty-two shillings was agreed on as a price, and Mrs. Grimes informed the man she wanted the ketchup for a customer up at the Ferry.

"Can I drive it up there for yer? I'm goin' round that way."

"No, thank ye. I'll give a boy tuppence ter crowd it up in a barrer. Don't ye forget ter bring t' other when yer next come this way."

"Why didn't yer let him take it ter th' Ferry—'t would ha' saved tuppence," Julia asked as she watched the cart disappear down the village street.

"Well, there, Julia, I did think yer'd more o' a head for business! I wants my profit, in course. I shall send up a bill for six and twenty shillen'; fare ter me we shall make a tidy sum over this here ketchup afore we ha' done."

The same afternoon the bottles were carefully packed into a wheelbarrow and a boy found to wheel it to the Ferry. Within the course of an hour or so he returned with a message from the landlord that no one of the name of Smithers was staying at the inn. "And as I had ter crowd it back agen, will yer please

give me another copper, mum?" said the boy, mindful of his own interests.

Mrs. Grimes gazed at her daughter in open-mouthed astonishment. "Not known, and th' young man said they wor there on an off th' whole winter! 'Clare ter Gawd, I see through it now—'twor a trick ter *de*fraud us. Them there chaps belonged to one another, and they ha' done us out o' tew and twenty shillen'."

"Seems like it," said Julia. "Seems ter me as though this wery perlite young man wor a bit tew business-like in his talk, leastways for tew women-folk with no man ter advise 'em."

"I'll catch th' wagabonds yet," cried Mrs. Grimes, allowing Julia's sarcasm to pass unreproved. "I'll go and see if th' perliceman be at home," and she hurried out of the shop and up the street.

It was a somewhat chastened woman who received Mr. Forbes on his next round. As she herself remarked, she was "fairly beat out" over the whole business. Glad of a fresh sympathizer she poured the story of her troubles into the young man's ears, who said:

"Maybe as how I can help ye in th' matter, Mrs. Grimes."

"Yer, how can yer help me, I'd like ter know?"

"Well, mum, yer see it's like this: 'Tain't likely as them there scoundrels 'll be content with havin' tricked one owd lady. I drive through a lot o' parishes in th' week and, maybe, I'll find 'em tryen' their game on in some other willage. If yer gives me a description o' them, and I happen ter drop on 'em, 't would be easy matters ter run 'em in, that's all."

"Well, there, Mr. Forbes, fare ter me there be a lot in what yer say, and I'd be wery obliged ter ye if yer could. It be right wexen' ter look at all that there sauce"—and the old lady pointed to a row of black bottles disposed on a shelf at the back of the shop.

"Well, I'll dew my best, Mrs. Grimes, and keep a sharp look-out," and saying this Mr. Forbes bade mother and daughter good-bye.

"Fare ter me," remarked the old woman, as the traveler closed the door behind him—"fare ter me that young chap ha' got his head screwed on th' right way. Shouldn't wonder if he hain't got a head for business. I'll think a deal more o' him if he bring them blackguards ter justice." But Julia held her peace.

Some weeks passed ere Mr. Forbes pulled up at the shop and ran in with the news that the ketchup men were caught.

"I thought as how I might ha' th' luck ter drop on th' beauties, Mrs. Grimes, and I ha' made inquiries and ha' kept my eyes open ever since ye told me about 'em. I began ter be afeard they'd gone clean away, but yesterday I run right up agen them in a willage just outer Norwich, and they wor trying on th' same game. I gets hold o' a perliceman and gives 'em in charge. I hears as tew or tree people are agoen' ter follow th' law onter 'em, so yer needn't take th' trouble o' goin' ter Norwich if yer hain't a mind ter. They'll get tree months for th' job, I expect."

Mrs. Grimes could not conceal her satisfaction. "I be right proud on yer, Mr. Forbes, I be; seem ter me yer knows a bit about business arter all. Just yer step inter my room—I want ter ha' a few words along o' yer. Well," went on the old lady, when the door was shut on Julia's curious ears, "ha' yer the same mind about my gal, Mr. Forbes? 'Cos I ha' right taken ter yer. I be getten old and don't fare ter care ter look arter th' business as I used ter dew, and Julia she be young. Why, only this summer some o' them young sparks comed off a yacht and bought a lot o' things, and ordered a lot more, and said they'd call for 'em on their way back from Acle and pay for 'em all tergether, and we never see'd a glint o' them no more. And then comed this here ketchup job—fare ter me things are all goin' contrary-like! So if yer be in th' same mind as regards Julia 't won't be me as 'll stand in yer way no longer, and yer can come and help us keep shop. Seeing as th' world is full o' wagabonds and thieves, maybe we'll find a man about th' premises waller'ble!"

Had you been walking through the village the next summer your attention would at once have been drawn to a shop all splendid in fresh paint, with a large new window set out like a Norwich grocer's. Above the window, on a red board with gold letters, was written "Forbes & Co. Yachting parties specially provided for"; and within, behind a marble-topped counter, Mr. Forbes, in a clean white apron, helped his smiling wife to serve the many customers. Everything connected with the shop was, as the little calendar slipped inside your parcel informed you, up to date, and of one commodity you could be sure of finding a plentiful supply, and that was Mushroom Ketchup.

# His Girl: A Tale of Self-Devotion, by Frank H. Sweet*

THE great week was over, and of the three or four hundred girls who had filled the college buildings and campus with their bright, earnest life, not more than a dozen remained, and all but one of these had their trunks packed for speedy departure. This one was Mary Cathcart, who did not know where she could go if she did pack.

This morning she was standing near the entrance of the lecture hall, wondering what she should do. For ten days she had been looking hopefully for a letter, but none had come. None seemed likely to come, now.

She had not specially fitted herself for anything; and she rather looked forward to coming back after the summer holidays to take a post-graduate course, when, if it should seem best, she would study for one of the half-dozen callings which many of her schoolmates were already entering upon. But it all depended upon the letter, and the letter had not come.

A girl but little older than herself came briskly from the building. It was the French teacher, and she was now going straight to the station, to take the next train for home. Mary looked at her a little enviously.

As the teacher reached the foot of the steps she smiled and nodded. "Not gone yet, Miss Cathcart?" she said.

"No; I am looking round."

"I understand. It is a lovely place. I expected to find it hard to leave, but after the past week everything seems so lonely and dreary that I am glad to get away. When do you go?"

A second before Mary had not even thought of packing her trunk. Now she answered promptly, "In the afternoon train."

"That is nice. Where do you go?"

"To Longley."

*Written for Short Stories.

The answer was unpremeditated, but, oddly enough, with it banished the listlessness and discontent and doubt from the girl's face. As the French teacher turned away, she walked rapidly across the campus, ran up the steps and into the building which had been her home for four long years, and on up the stairs to her own prettily furnished room. To Longley? Of course. That was the place from which she had been expecting the letter.

Two hours later she was at the station and had purchased a ticket. She had money enough to pay her expenses for a month. Beyond that she did not know.

Whom should she find at Longley? Should she even find anybody? A letter which had come to her after her mother's death, more than four years before, bidding her to enter upon a course at this college, and stating that money would be sent to her from time to time, as before, was all she had to go by. The letter had been postmarked "Longley." Before that, money had been sent to her mother from banks in New York, Boston, and other cities, but never twice from the same place. During her college course it had been the same.

She had always been generously supplied, and had furnished her room well, and had had money to spend. Then, as the end of the course approached, she had confidently looked forward to another letter. But none had come. The one postmarked Longley was her only clue, and even that might have been mailed by some one passing through the place.

Her mother had thought the money might come from a wealthy uncle, who had had some disagreement with the family, and who took this way of saving his pride. He was eccentric and fond of traveling about from place to place.

All this passed through her mind as the train rushed on. At length Longley was called, and Mary rose and hurried out to the little platform of a small country station.

As she looked around, her heart sank. There was a long, unpainted wooden building, with many small windows, which she afterwards learned was a cotton factory. She could hear the harsh clack, clack, clack-a-clack of the looms from where she stood. Round the mill were several dozen small houses, all alike, and all without shade trees or yards. She looked eagerly for a mansion, with piazzas and lawn, but there was none; only the unpainted factory tenements, with two or three buildings in the midst of them which might be stores

or offices. Compared with the campus and spacious college buildings, it seemed unutterably dreary and lonesome, and Mary turned longingly toward the train which was disappearing in the distance. Of course, it was a mistake, her coming here.

The station master was dragging her trunk back from the edge of the platform, where it had been dropped. She went to him.

"There are no Cathcarts here, of course," she said, more as an assertion than as a question.

"No; guess not; never heered of any. Be you lookin' up some?"

"Y—es; I thought I might find a relative here. When is the next train?"

"Not till to-morrer."

She drew a long breath.

"Is there a hotel near?"

"Fact'ry boardin' house; but I guess it's pretty full. That's it down yonder," pointing with his finger; "the house with a blind swingin' on one hinge. Be you lookin' for a job? I hear they're needin' two or three more weavers. That's the only job I know of, unless it's old Tom Farrar's. He's been man o' all work round the mill ever since nobody knows when; but he's been sick now for a month or so. But of course, you don't want that job. But, oh, say!" as she started down the platform, "I 'most forgot. I heered this mornin' that the woman who's been nussin' Tom is goin' off to-day. Mebbe ye could get her job."

Mary nodded her thanks, a sudden resolution flashing into her eyes. She was a girl who made up her mind quickly, often on impulse, as now. She had not thought of obtaining a situation, but why not? If she returned to the college town she would scarcely have money enough to pay her expenses through the vacation, even with the strictest economy.

So when the boarding-house keeper grimly informed her that there was not a room, not even a lounge, vacant, she did not look dismayed as she might otherwise have done, but smilingly inquired her way to the home of Mr. Farrar. There she found a middle-aged woman, who greeted her anxiously. But on learning her errand the woman's face cleared.

"That's what I call a special providence!" she exclaimed heartily. "You see, I've got to go, for my sister's sick; but

I've been hatin' to leave old Mr. Farrar. The very best I could think of was gettin' a neighbor's little girl, only fourteen, to come in; but she'd be a pretty poor excuse. Have you done any nussin'?"

"I took care of my mother a good many years before she died."

"Then it's all right, an' I'm glad. You'll not have a bit of trouble lookin' arter things here. Mr. Farrar's one of the best housekeepers I know, if he has kept bachelor's hall. There's everything one wants to do with, an' it's all spic an' span. An' Mr. Farrar himself will not give a mite of trouble. Even when he's wanderin'—which has been most of the time, so far—he's gentle an' soft-spoken. One can't help lovin' the old man. But come in! come in!" stepping back from the doorway to allow Mary to enter. "You might as well begin right off, an' I'll be packin' my trunk."

"Is he very ill?" Mary asked, as she went inside.

"Well, no; not so very, now. He's gettin' better slowly. The doctor says he'll begin to sense things in another week. An', oh, yes! he told me when I fust come that he could only pay three dollars a week, for he had other expenses to meet outside. I s'pose you'll get the same. But it's a nice place to stay, an' I think you'll like it."

She was right; Mary did like it. She remembered many of the tempting dishes which she had prepared for her mother, and she made them now, singing little snatches of song as she did so. She had not known what she was fitted for. Now she knew that she could be a good nurse. Perhaps she could also be good at other things; but she had not found that out yet.

What surprised her most were the books in every room, some of which even she looked at with awe. They all showed marks of much use, as well as loving care. The old man's hands were rough and calloused, as befitted a man of all work round the mill; but for all that, he was evidently a scholar, and Mary felt that she could read proof of it in the strong brow and dreamy eyes.

As the days went by, these eyes began to follow her as she moved softly about the room, contented and lovingly at first, then with a questioning wistfulness, as though the clouded mind were striving to grasp something it could not quite reach. Then, one day, there were several minutes when the

eyes grew clear and intelligent, and gazed at her with almost startled wonder. The next day the lucid interval was longer, and several times repeated. But he did not speak; he only gazed at her and passed his hand across his brow from time to time, as though to clear his brain. Once he turned his face to the wall, and when she went to him a little later she found traces of tears upon his cheeks.

Then came a morning when he was strong enough to sit up in bed; but still the wistfulness and wonder remained in his eyes, and mingled with them now was a certain resignation. Presently he motioned Mary to his side.

"You are a new nurse?" he said.

"Yes."

"I knew it, of course, but I haven't said anything. I—I have been trying to get my mind clear. I thought as I got stronger my mind would get better, but it doesn't. I—I'm afraid it's getting worse. I suppose I'm growing old, and it's to be expected, but I've been planning for a good deal of reading and study yet, and haven't realized how the years slip by."

Mary stroked his hand softly.

"You cannot get well all at once, Mr. Farrar," she chided. "You have been very sick, you know. But you are growing stronger, gradually, and your brain is growing clearer I can see it."

"You don't understand," he answered, gently, "my body's stronger, but my mind doesn't seem to gain. It made you out to be somebody else from the first, and has persisted in the hallucination ever since. I've looked in other directions, and changed my thoughts to other things; but it's no use. You've taken care of me, so my mind says that you're somebody whom I used to know a long time ago, who's dead. I suppose it's what folks call second childhood." Then changing the subject abruptly: "How long have I been sick?"

"I do not know. I have only been here two weeks. It is now the fifteenth of July."

He looked startled.

"So late?" he gasped. "Why, I—I've got a little girl off to school who ought to have been written to long ago. Will you bring me my pen and paper from the desk?"

She complied, but his hand trembled so that he could not hold the pen.

"Let me do it for you," she said, taking the pen from his shaking fingers and moving a small table close to his bedside. Now, how shall I begin?"

But he remained silent, looking at her doubtfully. "I—I—you see, I don't write to her directly," he said at length, hesitatingly. "There's an old friend in New York who acts for me." He was silent for some minutes longer, then went on, desperately:

"The letter must be written, and I suppose it'll be best to explain things a little. You see, when I was a boy I had a strong notion for college, but there were reasons why I had to work hard year after year. When at last I was fixed so I could go, I felt that I was too old. Besides, I was sort of settled with the books I liked to read, and had lost ambition to go out into the world. But I didn't give up the idea altogether; I would send somebody in my place. So I looked round. I had no relative save a little girl whom I used to play with when a boy. She had married and gone West. I traced her and found that her husband was dead and that she was an invalid without means. That was something nearer than college, so I sent her from time to time what money I had to spare. When she died, I arranged for her girl to go to college."

He paused, with his gaze upon the coverlet, his eyes unobservant, dreamy, reminiscent.

Mary had risen, her eyes shining.

"Why didn't you write to her, directly?" she breathed.

"Well, she was a college girl, you see, with college girl notions. I liked to think of her as my girl, and to plan things for her. If I'd written to her directly, it—it might have been different. You see, I'm just a man of all work in a factory." He held up his hands, white and transparent from his illness, but still knotty and hard from a lifetime of toil. "I don't know much about girls," he went on, "but I want to think of this one as mine, and I can't bear the thought of her ever—"

"Mr. Farrar, do you think any girl could be ashamed of you?"

The quick, passionate cry brought his gaze suddenly from the coverlet. What he read in her voice, in her eyes, brought a look of rapt understanding to his face.

"Then my mind isn't wandering," he exclaimed, tremulously. "It's she, really and truly. Mary, bring me that tin box in my desk."

She brought it and eagerly he ran his fingers through the contents, soon finding a tintype, which he opened and held up for her inspection. It might have been her own picture, so exact was the likeness. She recognized it, with a low cry.

"It's your mother, Mary," he said, softly, "taken just before she went West."

# An Absence Without Leave. By Henry de Forge. Translated from the French by Lawrence B. Fletcher*

"PRIVATE CÉLESTIN BRIDOUX, of the Tenth Company, is commanded to appear before a court-martial at headquarters of the Third Division of the Sixth Corps, to answer the charge of deserting his post and abandoning army property."

Such was the regimental order which was read by the sergeant-majors between an inspection of uniforms and the announcement of a coming inspection of quarters.

And at the word "court-martial" every man in the regiment felt a crawling sensation along his spine.

There was something very impressive indeed in the dignified and solemn group of officers in full uniform about the green-baize-covered table.

The president of the court was an old colonel with a benevolent expression despite his fiercely upturned mustache.

Beside him sat the judge-advocate and two other officers silently examining the military code and various documents.

A voice cried, "Bring in the accused!" and Bridoux entered, guarded by two soldiers.

The charge against him was that during the grand maneuvers he had left his regiment without permission, taking with him his arms and uniform. Ten days afterward he had been found in civilian's dress, and arrested.

The prisoner was a thin little fellow with frank blue eyes and a harmless and timid manner. He did not look like a hardened criminal, and he stared at this formidable machinery of justice with evident consternation.

A lieutenant, in a monotonous voice, read the accusation.

*Translated for Short Stories.

"What have you to say in your defense?" the president asked.

Bridoux apparently had nothing to say, for he sat sobbing, with his face buried in his handkerchief, from which at intervals escaped a single word, always the same: "Fanchette!"

"Some camp follower," muttered one of the officers. "These fellows are all alike."

And as Bridoux obstinately refused, or rather remained unable, to give an account of himself, it was decided to call the sole witness in the case, who was set down in the report as the demoiselle Fanchette Chevalier.

A young peasant girl came forward, blushing like a rose. A starched and fluted white cap was poised daintily on her curly hair. Her saucy little tip-tilted nose was in striking contrast with her downcast eyes, veiled by long silky lashes.

For this important occasion she had arrayed herself in an immense black shawl that added greatly to the dignity of her appearance, but was forever getting in her way.

The old colonel addressed her kindly and told her to hold up her right hand to take the oath. Up went the chubby little hand bravely enough, but she had no sooner begun to give her testimony than she burst into tears, so that the clerk of the court had to lead her to a seat and pat her paternally on the shoulder.

The members of the court, perplexed and embarrassed, were gazing silently at the weeping witness and the sobbing prisoner, when the latter rose to the occasion and, in a quavering but determined voice, said:

"With your permission, Colonel, I will tell you all about it. I cannot let that child go on crying like this. I am not a bad fellow, Colonel. If you ask my corporal he will tell you that I am attentive to my duties and that I have had only five days' arrest, three for crying in the ranks, and two for losing my belt.

"Don't worry, Fanchette! These gentlemen are only trying to frighten us. You know that I haven't done anything wrong."

After this "aside" Bridoux resumed his narrative with greater self-confidence.

"Well, in the course of the maneuvers, my regiment had got to Quincy, over there near Favières, you know. I was about played out. I had marched twenty-five miles that day, carry-

ing not only my own kit, but half of my comrade Pingot's. The poor fellow is consumptive, you know, and he had a bad cough. My billet took me to a house at the end of the town, the house of Mam'selle Fanchette's father. Ah! he is a fine man! He received me with open arms, treated me like one of the family and nothing in the way of eating and-drinking was too good for me. He cleaned and polished up my things himself, for I was half dead with fatigue, and Fanchette, who seemed to guess that I had a sweet tooth, made all sorts of good things for me. She spoke to me as affectionately as if I had been her brother, the dear little girl, and her words had an effect on me that I cannot describe. I am a soft one, I know. My eyes often leak—I even got the lock-up for it, you know—but the tears I shed that night were different. There was a good reason for them. I tried to argue with myself, and said: 'Come, Bridoux, brace up and be a man. You are an honest man and a good soldier—and an orphan. It is nobody's business but your own.' Then remembering that I should have to leave in the morning for another long march and that I should probably never see Fanchette again, I decided that I must speak that night, both to her and to her father, who seemed to like me so well. I had it all arranged in my mind to speak during a stroll under the trees, but when the decisive moment came my courage failed me. And so all through the night I lay broad awake in the big bed in the best room, thinking what a fool I was and that it was now too late to speak. I tormented myself in this way until morning—and then I fell asleep! You see, Colonel, I had twenty-five miles in my legs and we were at the far end of the town; I did not hear the bugle and when I did wake up the regiment was miles on its way. For a moment I was scared blue, but then I thought of Fanchette, and that now I should be able to say what I ought to have said last night. It would only mean a few days' arrest, after all. I told Papa Chevalier that I had orders to stay behind, and Fanchette seemed pleased. We walked and talked together all the morning and at last I made my avowal, and Fanchette blushingly agreed to ask her father's consent as soon as he should return. For, as ill-luck would have it, her father, who was a mason, was away at work and would not return until night. But I said to myself that as I was already absent from my regiment without leave, another day would make no difference in my punish-

ment. So I spent the evening very agreeably with Fanchette and her grandmother, and even helped wash dishes, as if I had been one of the family. When Papa Chevalier heard my confession next day, he grasped my hands heartily and asked me to step over to the café where, over a bottle of old wine, that he was polite enough to offer me, he told me that he felt highly honored by my proposal, but that a young man from a neighboring village had already asked for Fanchette's hand. The little one, who did not care much for her suitor, had asked time for reflection, but as the young man was prosperous and connected in business with her father the latter had as good as given his consent and promise.

"I was almost disheartened by this blow, but took courage and decided to go myself and have a parley with this Benoit Lulon, my rival. It would not take long and another day would not matter much. So I begged Fanchette not to change her mind, and set out on foot for my rival's home, several leagues away. When I got there I learned that Lulon had gone to a fair in another town and would not be back until next day. I waited for him, and at last we met.

"He did not beat about the bush at all, but told me plump and plain that it was not Fanchette's pretty face that he was after, but a piece of land that she would inherit from her grandmother, and that he had long had his eye upon. He would give up the girl and the ground, he said, for four hundred francs.

"'Very well,' I answered, 'I have a little money saved up and you shall have the four hundred francs.'

"'It's a bargain!' said Benoit Lulon.

"A vile bargain it was, and I suppose I ought to have broken the fellow's head for proposing it, but I was so much in love with Fanchette that I would have stooped to any means to overcome the obstacle to our marriage. My long absence from the regiment worried me a little, but once more I persuaded myself that a matter of a few days more or less would not make much difference.

"I wrote to my aunt, who takes care of my savings, to send me the money, and then I went back to Papa Chevalier and told him all about it.

"The good man embraced me and I embraced Fanchette.

"I was having a glass with Benoit Lulon to seal the bargain when I was arrested. I was dressed like a farmer because

my uniform suggested such unpleasant thoughts that I had left it at Papa Chevalier's.

"That is why I am here, Colonel. It is all on account of Fanchette and her fine eyes. Look at them, Colonel! Did you ever see prettier ones? If you send me to Africa I shall be the most wretched of men, and perhaps Benoit Lulon will—"

Bridoux broke down and began to sob again.

The officers regarded him sternly though they felt a strong inclination to laugh.

"Are you sorry for what you have done, my man?" the colonel asked.

Fanchette replied for her lover, "Do you think he ought to be, sir?" said she, with her impertinent little nose pointing skyward.

To the astonishment of everyone the court-martial of the Third Division of the Sixth Corps displayed unexampled leniency on this occasion, and Bridoux got off with sixty days in prison. His captivity was sweetened by the thought that he could marry Fanchette as soon as he should be released,and one morning, with his breakfast, the corporal on guard handed him a big envelope which contained four beautiful blue 100-franc notes, the gift of the old colonel.

# HIS Bride and Matilda Jane: The Story of a Misunderstanding, by Una Hudson. Illustrations by Bessie Collins Pease*

THE porter stopped before lower seven. "Rawlins, sah," he said, in what was intended for a discreet whisper, but which, nevertheless, penetrated to the far end of the car and drew objurgations from an irascible old gentleman who resented being roused from his first nap.

The bride caught at her husband's arm. "I am so excited," she whispered. "How I wish it were daylight, so I could see my new home. It is so dark I cannot see a thing."

She spoke with a soft slurring of her words that betokened her Southern birth and her eyes were bright with eager anticipation.

"You'll see it soon enough," her husband told her, and he rejoiced in the friendly darkness that, like charity, covered a multitude of sins and mercifully veiled the ugliness of the landscape. For Wyoming in the early seventies was far from being a garden spot.

"Careful of the steps, lady," cautioned the porter, and he helped the bride from the train. She stood ankle deep in sand, the sand that is peculiar to the West and in substance is a cross between flour and cornmeal.

"Oh," she gasped, "why don't you—all indulge in a moon? I have stepped in something horrid and squashy."

"It's sand," her husband explained, "one of the chief products of the West. Another is sagebrush. I think you have

*Written for Short Stories.

discovered that also." For the bride struggling out of the sand had stumbled into a stiff, prickly plant that pierced her thin shoes and tore her gown.

"I think," she said faintly, "it is something worse than sagebrush. It seems to have thorns and one of them is in my foot."

Morse dropped the satchels he was carrying and groped at his wife's feet. "It's cactus, Betty," he said, and pulled something resembling a darning needle out of her shoe. "I hope," he went on anxiously, "your foot is not injured."

Now a girl who all her life has trodden upon soft green grass and thoughtlessly crushed sweet scented clover and golden-hearted daisies beneath her slippered feet may, not unnaturally, object to sand and cactus. Something that threatened to be a sob rose in the bride's throat; but she remembered that she was now the wife of a pioneer and resolutely crushed it back. She even achieved a very fair imitation of a laugh.

"It's the merest trifle," she said, "and my foot does not hurt at all."

"You're lying," Morse said. "But you're just the wife for a pioneer."

For the quality, whether in man or woman, that appeals to a Western man above all others is pluck, the pluck that disregards pain, makes a jest of misfortune, and in the end wins out.

The lump in the bride's throat disappeared as by magic; she laughed again and this time the laugh rang true.

"How very impolite," she said with mock severity. But she gave her husband's arm a quick little squeeze and he knew that he had pleased her.

"And now," she cried gayly, "hadn't we better resume our triumphant progress?"

"Hist!" Morse said, not to be outdone by his wife; "one approaches. Ha! It is my faithful retainer."

He reached a friendly hand to the man who had suddenly loomed out of the darkness.

"Why, Hall! This is good of you. We didn't expect you to get up in the middle of the night to meet us. And here is my wife."

The newcomer bent low over the bride's hand. "Mrs. Morse," he said, "I am glad to be the first to welcome you to your new home. Every man in town wanted to meet you

to-night, but I made 'em stay at home, for I thought, perhaps, you would rather take us in sections."

"You—all are awfully kind," the bride said in her soft Southern voice. "I've been brought up, you know, to believe that all the chivalry in the world is confined to the South, but I reckon there's right smart of it out West. You are Mr. Hall, George's partner, aren't you? And we are all to live together over the store. I'm sure it will be great fun."

Hall possessed himself of the travelers' impedimenta. "Help your wife along, Morse," he said. "The walking is simply atrocious."

"It is indeed," the bride assented pathetically. "My shoes are full of sand and I've been investigating a cactus."

"You should have tried sagebrush first and worked up to cactus by degrees," Hall told her. Whereat the bride laughed lightly and Hall nodded approval. "She'll do," was his unspoken comment.

"Home at last, Betty," Morse said after an interval of plodding through sand and dodging sagebrush; and the trio stopped before an unattractive frame building.

"It looks so queer," Betty Morse said. "It seems to be propped up with telegraph poles."

"That is to strengthen the upper story," her husband explained. "Sometimes we have very high winds," and the bride shivered apprehensively, for she was nervously afraid of winds.

"Do——do you have them very often?" she asked anxiously.

"Well, mostly every day," her husband reluctantly admitted. "I say, Hall, anything the matter? You don't seem able to get the door open.'"

"It's all right now," and the door swung open and the bride had her first glance at her new home. She entered a long, narrow hall dimly lighted by a sputtering kerosene lamp.

"That lamp never would burn properly," and "mighty poor kerosene," apologized the two men in a breath.

But the bride's cheerfulness was of a quality to triumph over all obstacles.

"Never mind the lamp," she cried gayly. "What is this?" and she pointed to a door at her right. "That's the store," they told her.

"Oh, of course. And the stairway goes to our rooms—our

house." And she laughed such a light-hearted, infectious little laugh that the men smiled out of sympathy.

Mr. Hall collected the valises and bundles. "Look out for your wife, Morse," he said. "The stairway is a bit dark. Mind the landing, Mrs. Morse."

"Really," gasped the bride, "your stairs are very hard to climb. I haven't a bit of breath left."

"It's the altitude," her husband said. "Here, take my

arm; there, that is better. This is your parlor," and he threw open a door and stood aside for her to enter; but she stopped short with a little astonished exclamation of delight.

"It is for all the world like a bit of the woods in Autumn," she cried. "Such lovely red-browns. Oh, it is beautiful, beautiful!"

And in that moment her husband was repaid for all the money and care lavished on the furnishings of the nest for his

dainty wife. For a pretty room is no small achievement when carpets and curtains must be ordered from samples and furniture selected from a catalogue.

The bride threw aside her traveling cloak and hat. "I feel at home already," she declared. "Oh, and there are plants; actually geraniums and ivy; and as I live, a rose bush in the pot! And, see, it's budded! How cunning!" and she thought with never a pang of regret of the countless roses that rioted about her Southern home; for she was young and happy and looked on life through the rosy mist of love.

Her husband gathered up her wraps and satchels. "And now for your room. You must be sleepy," he said.

"Really," she demurred, "I do not feel in the least like going to bed. I want to see all the rest of my new home,"

"Not to-night," he told her. "You will have all day to-morrow for that, while there is only half a night left for sleep."

But long after she lay peacefully sleeping by his side, he lay awake, a prey to doubts and misgivings. For in his mind's eye he saw the grim, gray prairie as she must see it in the morning, spread out in all its barren ugliness. But he had grown accustomed to the endless sagebrush and the shifting sand, while to her, grass and flowers were unconsidered trifles, lightly accepted because so lavishly bestowed.

"If only the wind would not blow," he thought.

And then, as if he called a very demon of mischief and it had answered, there came to his ears a low, rushing sound. The wind was rising. It moaned and sobbed, now low, now high. It shrieked from house to house, and like a playful giant caught up handfuls of gravel and flung it rattling against the window panes. It caught the house in its relentless grip and rocked it to and fro, and the little bride awoke with a scream of terror and clung sobbing to her husband.

"It is only the wind," he said, and shudderingly she lay quiet.

"*Only* the wind!" She had not thought that wind could be so fierce a thing. How terrible it was—this gusty roaring blast that shook the very bed whereon she lay.

She sought desperately to regain her lost courage, but it was a forlorn, white-faced little bride, who, in the gray light of the early morning, drew aside the curtain and looked out at the few straggling little houses that made up the town, and beyond them stretches of sandy prairie hemmed in by the foothills.

"Why," she cried, astonished, "does it snow in June? How can it? It seems so warm."

Her husband came to her side. "Oh, you mean those white patches on the ground. It is alkali, not snow. It is the alkali in the ground and in the water that makes it impossible for anything to grow—that, and the absence of rain."

"Does it never rain?"

"Perhaps once or twice a year, a few drops. That is all."

The bride turned from the window with a dreary little sigh. How appallingly desolate it was; worse, far worse, than she had ever imagined it could possibly be.

"It is almost a desert," she said, and a silence fell between them that neither knew how to break.

The suggestive rattle of dishes recalled the bride to the duties of her new position.

"Is it breakfast?" she asked. "I thought we had no servant."

Her husband led the way to the dining room. "It's Hall," he explained.

That gentleman met them beamingly. He wore a huge gingham apron—made by himself as he afterwards explained with modest pride—and he held the largest butcher knife the bride had ever seen.

"You know, Mrs. Morse, we have been 'batching'," he explained. "I am chief cook. Thought I would get breakfast this morning. You will better appreciate your own cooking after you have had a taste of mine. My cooking is bad, but your husband's is worse. We cooked turn about for a while till I told him I would rather do it all than eat the awful messes he concocted."

The bride took her place behind the coffee-pot. "I am sure it looks very nice," she said. "I cannot cook very much myself," she confessed prettily, "but I dare say I can learn. I suppose you cannot get servants out here."

"We had a Chinaman once but we had to let him go. He said he was 'velly lonesome' and wanted to spend his evenings with us; but we couldn't stand for it, for he wasn't just exactly what you might call a congenial companion."

The bride glanced inquiringly over the table. "Isn't there any fruit?" she ventured.

"Fruit?" Mr. Hall rose with alacrity. "Of course, if you want it. I'll open a can of peaches; or would you prefer pears?"

"I didn't mean quite that," the bride explained. "Is there no fresh fruit—berries, you know?"

The two men gazed blankly at the bride. "There never was a berry in this town that didn't come in a tin can," her husband said. "And our vegetables are canned, too. We live out of tin cans." The bride checked a little exclamation of dismay. Would she ever, she wondered, become inured to the surprises of her new home?

"It's all so strange," she said, taking the bull by the horns. "You—all mustn't think that I am not going to like it out here for I certainly am. Only, you know, there are so many things for me to get used to. I have had berries right off the bushes all my life and I think, for change, it will be rather nice to have them out of tin cans." It was an outrageous fib, but her husband loved her all the better for it; and later in the day Mr. Hall confided to a friend that "the bride was clean grit all the way through."

"We will get your trunk up as soon as ever we can," Morse said as the men rose from the table, "and if you get lonesome you had better come down into the store. It may amuse you."

"I'll come *before* I get lonesome," Betty answered brightly. "'An ounce of prevention,' you know."

Morse nodded smilingly and the two men went below stairs.

The bride cleared the table and washed the breakfast dishes, keeping carefully away from the windows the while.

"I have already had enough, and more than enough of Wyoming landscape," she said to herself. But it was an admission that nothing could have induced her to make to her husband.

When the last dish had been carefully put away she untied her apron and turned toward the window. "I'll take it on the installment plan—a little at a time," she said half aloud. "I have seen the view from my bedroom window. That is, I have seen the sand and sagebrush and those miserable little houses. Now the kitchen faces south; perhaps I'll see something better from this window." She smiled whimsically and looked out. The sagebrush near the house had been dug up and a bit of ground fenced in. "Sand *with* sagebrush is objectionable," she said judicially, "but not so objectionable as sand *without* sagebrush. Did one ever see so dreadful a back yard?"

A forlorn little chicken struggled through the sand, each one of its feathers blown in a different direction.

The woman at the window turned quickly away. She thought of the plump fowls that scratched contentedly in the poultry yard of her Southern home. "The very chickens are different," she cried desperately. "Oh, this dreadful place! Can I ever, ever get used to it?" She wiped her eyes half laughingly. "That wretched little chicken! Why couldn't it keep out of sight? I am afraid it is too late for the 'ounce of prevention,' but I'll see what the 'pound of cure' will do."

But at the head of the stairs she paused, for a most picturesque figure stood in the hall below. The bride's interest was roused.

"Dear me," she murmured, "I wonder is he a cow-boy or a miner?"

She looked curiously at his wide brimmed hat and corduroy trousers tucked into high cowhide boots.

"Of course," she decided, "he is a miner. A cowboy would wear spurs."

He passed into the store and she heard her husband's cordial "Hello, Jim! When did you get in? How are things in the Seminole?"

"Matildy Jane ain't doing well."

The bride wondered who Matilda Jane might be. Probably the man's wife.

"That so?" came her husband's voice, and it had an anxious note. "What's the matter?"

"Dunno. Reckon you better come up and look after her a bit."

The bride caught her breath sharply and strained her ears

for her husband's answer. It came startlingly clear and distinct.

"Matilda Jane is worth more than all the rest of them put together. I'll start to-morrow. Guess I better arrange to stay a week."

The bride waited to hear no more. She fled to her own room and shut herself in. What did it mean? It could mean but one thing, but how could she believe that of her husband—her husband of whom she had been so proud?

Oh, it was infamous, infamous. And how coolly he talked of spending a week with Matilda Jane. They seemed to take it quite as a matter of course. Was that, too, one of the customs of this awful place? Shades of her chivalrous Southern ancestors! That she should have left her home and followed this man to this desolate, desert country to find—Matilda Jane.

She seemed to have lived years in the last few minutes. And she had been ready to cry because the wind blew, and trees would not grow; because she must pick her berries from tin cans and a miserable blowsy little chicken lived in her back yard. She had been childish, yes. But surely, surely she had deserved nothing so dreadful as—Matilda Jane.

She got to her feet and opened her door, for her husband was calling her.

"I thought you might be lonesome," he said.

How dare he come to her like that! Outraged love, wound-

ed vanity, a thousand bitter passions surged within her. For a breathless moment the room spun before her. Then suddenly she became quite calm, for her resolve was taken. She would follow her husband to the "Seminole Country"—wherever that might be—and see Matilda Jane for herseif—and then— But beyond that her distraught brain refused to plan. Only he must not suspect that she had heard anything.

"I was just coming down," she managed to say, and she hoped that she spoke naturally. She stood before her dressing table and busied herself with comb and powder puff.

"I reckon I better fix my hair a little, first," she went on and her voice was quite steady, though low. Her uplifted arm, shielded her face and her husband evidently saw nothing amiss.

He walked twice the length of the little room, his hands plunged deep in his pockets.

"He's getting ready to break the news to me," Betty thought and her lips quivered so that the hair-pin she had been holding in her mouth fell to the floor.

Morse picked it up and placed it carefully in her fluffy brown hair. "Tell me I wouldn't make a good lady's maid," he said playfully and Betty's soul was in a tumult of silent rage.

He slipped his arm around her waist and pulled her down beside him on the bed.

"Sweetheart," he said, "it's a beastly shame, but I'll have to leave you in the morning. Got to go up into the Seminole country to stay a whole week."

And because she didn't dare to let her husband see her face Betty hid it on his shoulder; and because she was so very, very angry she cried stormily.

Morse gathered her into his arms and kissed the part of her pretty, flushed face that wasn't covered by a very damp handkerchief.

How dearly she must love him, he thought, to cry like that because of a prospective absence of a week. And he said all manner of fond, foolish things and kissed her some more and Betty wondered wretchedly how he could be such a hypocrite.

Then he brought a basin of cold water and tenderly bathed her swollen eyelids and insisted that she should spend the rest of the day in the store with him. Her unpacking, he said, could wait. It would be something to keep her busy while he was

gone; and Betty smiled scornfully (behind a sheltering handkerchief), for she wasn't at all sure that she wanted to unpack.

They dined on sardines and crackers, ginger snaps and canned peaches, because Morse said he couldn't possibly spare her to cook dinner and for the same reason their supper consisted of canned peaches and ginger-snaps, crackers and sardines.

And Betty, controlling her temper with difficulty, marveled at the deceitfulness of mankind.

To her great relief she was spared the necessity of making conversation after supper, for Morse was obliged to discuss business affairs with his partner, and from behind a book she listened absently to talk of sugar and potatoes while the image of Matilda Jane loomed large in the background.

Early the next morning Morse's buckboard waited in front of the store. He parted from his wife with evident reluctance.

"Brace up, little woman; it's only for a week," he whispered and he kissed her so tenderly that she was almost happy again, for she couldn't somehow entirely disbelieve in his love. But as he turned back into the store where Hall was waiting on an early customer she overheard a whispered "Matilda Jane" and more than ever was she determined to run to earth that mysterious and elusive person.

She spent the morning unpacking; for fighting blood ran in her veins and she had determined to hold her position in spite of Matilda Jane.

"I'll cut her out," she declared fiercely, "I'll *make* George stop caring for her."

And then she laughed hysterically, for there was a certain grim humor in the situation to which, notwithstanding her utter wretchedness, she could not be entirely insensible.

Her unpacking finished, she cooked Hall a dinner that caused that unsuspecting gentleman to wonder if all Southern girls were cooks by nature.

"He has probably had all the sardines and crackers he cares for," had been Betty's sage conclusion, "and he will be more apt to do what I want him to if he has a good dinner."

Beaming at him over a toothsome peach pie she opened her campaign.

"Do you know," she began, "I'm awfully sorry I didn't make George take me along with him."

Hall noted her suspiciously red eyelids and tremulously smiling lips. "She's lonely, poor little woman," he thought.

Aloud, he said, "Why don't you go after him, Mrs. Morse, and give him a surprise."

Betty clapped her hands like a pleased child.

"Why, what a good idea!" che cried, quite as though it were not the very thing she had herself determined upon. "How came you to think of it? But do you suppose I really can?"

"Why not?" Hall answered. "Bob Harris came in from his ranch last night. He'll be starting back in the morning and would be only too glad to have you go along with him. His place is just half way to the Seminole and you could stop over

night with his wife, and go on the next day. I'll fix it all right with Bob, Mrs. Morse."

And so it happened that just twenty-four hours after her husband's departure, Betty Morse began her search for Matilda Jane.

Bob Harris, big, rawboned and awkward, a typical rancher, proved to be affable and communicative.

"'Spose your husband's gone up to see Matildy Jane, Mrs. Morse?" he said.

And Betty, not daring to trust herself to speak, nodded silently.

"I heard tell as how she wasn't jest all right," Harris went

on, "an' I s'posed Morse would be going up quick's he got back. He sets a heap o' store by Matildy Jane, your husband does, Mis' Morse. He had hard work gettin' her, too. Had to take the hull bunch o' them; but Matildy Jane's the only one he thinks anything of."

"Is—isn't Matilda Jane the *only* one?" Betty questioned faintly.

"Land sakes, no!" laughed Harris. "There's four 'sides her. Morse calls 'em his Seminole Beauties. He's dead stuck on Matildy Jane, Morse is; had to have her at any price."

And then at last Betty understood. She had unconsciously married a *Mormon*. And she was his sixth wife!

Harris talked on and on, but Betty heard only a confused rumble of words that conveyed no meaning whatever. She smiled wanly from time to time and answered "yes" and "no" and her companion was serenely oblivious to anything amiss. Of her trip to the Seminole country Betty had afterwards only a confused recollection of miles upon miles of shifting sand and gray-green sagebrush, of scorching wind and choking dust and of a night at the Harris ranch, a night spent in listening to the distant howls of coyotes and the nearer bark of the ranch dog. She had no power to think or plan for the future; she could only lie still and suffer dumbly.

And then came more sand and dust and long, level stretches of ground white as though with snow—alkali plains whereon bleached the bones of luckless cattle that had strayed from the herd and perished for lack of water.

Late in the afternoon of the second day they forded a swiftly rushing mountain stream and Harris drew up the tired horses in the grateful shade of a bunch of cotton-wood trees.

"Matildy Jane's over yonder," he said, indicating a group of roughly constructed board shanties, " an' I s'pose you'll find your husband there."

But Betty made no move to descend from the wagon. Now that she was about to meet Matilda Jane face to face, all courage and strength seemed suddenly to leave her. She sat like one paralyzed, unable to think or move.

And then she became conscious that her husband was standing beside the wagon and helping her to the ground, and with a great heart-throb of joy in his near presence she realized that one-sixth of his love meant more of happiness to her than would the undivided affection of another man,

"Dear," she murmured, her hands fast locked in his, "I followed you because I was so lonely I could not live without you." And if she fibbed it was done all unconsciously.

Morse looked at her sunburned face and blistered nose, and the little wrinkle between her eyes that he knew meant an intolerable headache, and a great wave of love and pity swept over him.

"You poor little woman," he said. "I haven't words to tell you how glad I am to have you here ; but why didn't you tell me you wanted to come? I wanted to bring you with me, but it's such a horrible rough trip I didn't dare propose it."

"And, George," Betty went on tremulously, "I want to tell you that I know all about Matilda Jane and—and—the other four, and—and—I don't mind really—that is not so very much. Only I wish you had told me, yourself, before we were married. Didn't you know, dear, that I loved you well enough to marry you, no matter how many other wives you had?"

George Morse stared aghast. "My other wives!" he exclaimed. For an instant he almost doubted his wife's sanity. Then a great light broke in upon him.

"Betty," he cried, "in Heaven's name, who or what do you think Matilda Jane is?"

"She is your other wife," Betty said faintly. "Mr. Harris told me all about her."

"Bob Harris told you I was *married* to Matilda Jane?"

"He didn't say it just that way, but he told me how you thought so much of her and how you had to take the other four, the Seminole Beauties, to get Matilda Jane. So then, of course, I knew you were a Mormon."

Betty's voice broke into a sob and she turned aside her face to hide the tears that *would* come, spite all her self-control.

"A Mormon! I!" Morse burst out into a shout of laughter. Then at the sight of his wife's face, he grew suddenly grave.

"Sweetheart," he said gently, "you have made a big mistake. I haven't but one wife, yourself. Matilda Jane is a mine and some day she will make our fortune, too. There are five claims and I had to take them all to get Matilda Jane, but the other four are worthless. I call them my Seminole Beauties as a little joke; they all have women's names, you know. The man I bought them from named them for his mother and sisters." He put his hand under his wife's chin and turned her face upward until her eyes met his. "Betty," he asked

soberly, "were you really willing to share my love with five other women?"

"Willing!" Betty cried, and her voice was a wail of anguish. "Oh! no, no, not *willing*. It would have been like death to me, but if I alone could not make you happy, if you had needed those others, then, dear, I would have borne it, for I wanted your happiness more than my own."

"God!" Morse said very softly. "I did not know a woman could love like that."

He caught his wife in his arms and crushed her close in a mighty embrace, and in that moment Heaven opened wide to Betty Morse.

# A Sevenfold Inheritance, by Maurice Montégut. Translated from the French by Lawrence B. Fletcher.*

JEAN LOUIS CHARLES ERNEST ROBERT FRANÇOIS PHILIPPE DE LA GAULÉE was a scion of a noble stock. The seven baptismal names which he bore and signed so proudly were those of his father, grandfather, great-grandfather and earlier ascendants for two centuries. He knew by heart the histories of all these ancestors; beyond, there was a fog, a break in the genealogical line. The last of the La Gaulées was an orphan, without brother or sister, and lived with an old aunt in the crumbling castle in Poitou where seven generations of ancestors had lived and died before him. Being of an inquiring turn of mind, he employed his leisure in the minute study of the annals of his race, and after long research among faded documents and diligent inquiry of oldest inhabitants, had succeeded in esablishing by valid evidence the precise character of each of the seven barons de La Gaulée whose last incarnation he was and whose diverse traits he found in some sort reflected in his own complex spirit.

The memory of his father, Baron Jean, was yet green, and the old peasants, who had known him well, said:

"Ah, he was a rare one, the old baron! he had not windows enough in his chateau to fling his money out of. The better for us who picked it up."

Young Philippe looked into his heart and decided that he, too, was a born spendthrift, like his father.

Then he passed to his grandfather, Louis, and found a few very old men who still remembered him.

"As good a man as ever lived," they said, "and a mighty hunter, but very testy and over-ready with his stick. He had some sad affairs!"

*Translated for Short Stories.

So Philippe, having learned that his grandfather had been a great hunter and choleric, understood his own fondness for game and admitted that he was very irritable and disposed to thrash anyone who showed him the slightest disrespect.

In the case of his great-grandfather, he had to rely on written evidence. Baron Charles had been a marshal of the Empire, a *beau sabreur*, brave as Roland, a lover of battles and, by his own confessions, a victim of *ennui* in times of peace. On reading this little Philippe's ears tingled to the sound of imaginary "boots-and-saddles," and he had a confused vision of mad charges, waving flags, and golden eagles. He kissed the marshal's portrait and cried: "Vive l'empereur!"

After this the next seemed tame. Baron Ernest, who lived in the reign of Louis XV., had loved only the muses and graces—and their contemporary embodiments.

Bewigged and perfumed, with a fine leg and a talent for pirouettes, he appeared beneath contempt until Philippe discovered a packet of yellowed but still scented notes signed Pompadour, Dubarry, Parabère and other names of famous beauties of the court of Louis le Bien-Aimé. And all these notes began with the words: "Mon petit Ernest."

Now as Philippe made this discovery on a glorious day in May, which was also his sixteenth birthday, he decided that Baron Ernest was not so far wrong after all and that the claims of love and beauty are not to be disregarded.

When he came to Baron Robert he experienced a shock, for that gentleman had been little but an ambulant wine-vat. There was no record of his exploits and honors, but the inventory of his cellars was still extant for the edification of posterity. Philippe was on the point of condemning this vulgar ancestor and dismissing him as unworthy of further consideration when his judicial spirit suggested that it would be unfair to decide the case without examining all the evidence. So at dinner that evening, to the unspeakable horror of his noble aunt, he bade the butler fetch from the cellar three of the choicest exemplars of Baron Robert's fine taste in wines. This exhibit he discussed so exhaustively, that nothing was left but the empty bottles, and then he went to bed—having, so to speak, taken the papers and reserved his decision.

In the morning, on reviewing his pleasant dreams and recalling the exquisite savor and bouquet of the evidence for the defense, he granted Baron Robert plenary absolution and,

fired with a noble enthusiasm, declared that he likewise would be as brilliantly successful as a tippler as in any other capacity.

Baron François bothered our friend somewhat. Baron François was so intricate. He had been a royal councilor and a consummate statesman, and his life had been a tangle of intrigues, plots and counterplots of so machiavellian a character that it was impossible for the inexperienced young man to unravel it. He was about to skip this great but difficult ancestor when a chance passage informed him that Baron François, by a tissue of forgeries, falsehoods, and unscrupulous machinations, had once succeeded in seriously embroiling Spain and Austria to the great glory and advantage of France.

"Hold!" cried Philippe. "I, too, have two enemies who are leagued against me—the sexton and the gamekeeper. If the blood of Baron François flows in my veins I should be able to set my foes by the ears to my own profit. I will make the attempt!"

During the following week he invented more stratagems and told more fasehoods than had hitherto sullied the whole course of his innocent life—and on the eighth day his foes fell foul of one another on the high road and the beauty of each was ruined for life.

"There was some good in old François, after all," said Philippe.

The last—that is to say the first—of the seven ancestors was Philippe the First.

Young Philippe was deeply affected by the story of his namesake, who had been a holy man in the fullest and broadest meaning of the words. He had both preached and practised charity, forgiveness of injuries and all manner of virtues in the glorious and skeptical reign of Louis XIV., "Le Roi Soleil," and many must have been the good deeds, noble examples and pious precepts set down to his credit in the ledger of the recording angel.

Young Philippe was so much affected by the story of his namesake, the practical founder of his house, that he respectfully saluted the effigy of Philippe the First and murmured a short prayer. Then he pushed back the litter of old documents and reviewed the situation.

Among his ancestors he had found a spendthrift, a slaughterer of beasts and a brawler, a stainless soldier devoted to his

country and his emperor, a spruce and scented Don Juan, a sot, a political trickster and, lastly, a holy man, a saint unjustly omitted from the calendar.

And he was in love with all of them! By a complex atavism he seemed to have inherited the peculiarities of each. But how could he reconcile these discordant characters and blend them into one harmonious personality? How could he be at once a soldier and a saint, a breaker of hearts and a weaver of political intrigues? He was reluctant to sacrifice any part of his heritage, yet how could he enjoy it all?

He mused over the problem for weeks and at last, one evening when he had been imitating Baron Robert, the knight of the wine cellar, an inspiration rose from the bottom of the last bottle to his brain and there disported itself, luminous and fecund.

He could not be all his ancestors at once, but he could and would be each by turns, for has not the week seven days? So on Monday he would be a prodigal, on Tuesday quarrelsome. He would worship Mars on Wednesday, Venus on Thursday, and Bacchus on Friday. Saturday he would devote to politics, and Sunday, as is fitting, to pious meditation and prayer.

He put this ingenious idea into execution at once and for thirty years regulated his life in accordance with this singular plan. The sudden changes of this human chameleon gave rise to wondering gossip, but he became and remained very popular with all classes and conditions of men—including women. For on Mondays his reckless profusion drew benedictions from the poor who profited by it and on Tuesdays he organized great hunting parties which were the delight of the hot-headed and adventurous. On Wednesdays he listened and applauded while scarred veterans fought their battles over again, and on Thursdays his pretty compliments and irresistible glances won the hearts of fair ladies. Every Friday he invited a group of boon companions to a grand feast and carouse, yet the next day, sober and dignified, he would seek the society of judges and lawyers and astonish them by his legal knowledge and acumen, so that they often sought his advice in difficult cases. And when he knelt in church on Sunday he became a pattern and shining light to the whole parish, winning the admiration of the devout and the grateful affection of the good old curé.

He had the whole community in his power and there was

no height to which he might not have risen, had he been ambitious. But he was not ambitious.

Now this singular man had one thing in common with ordinary men, but he had the excuse that that was inherited from *all* his ancestors. He could not escape death.

To the curé who visited him in his last illness he said: "My dear curé, God alone knows His own plans. He will fix the day of my death and the day will decide whether my soul goes to Him or to the devil." It was on a Monday that the last of the La Gaulées expressed himself in this reckless and irreverent fashion. On Tuesday he thumped his pillows and railed at his attendants, not being able to thump *them*. On Wednesday he sang the Marseillaise and drummed on the bedstead. On Thursday he kissed his nurse. On Friday he drank so much chamomile tea that he was delirious all night. On Saturday he made his will, a marvel of intricacy which his heirs have not yet succeeded in untangling.

On Sunday he confessed and received the sacraments. Then he lay, rosary in hand, and gave utterance to words of Christian resignation that drew tears to the eyes of all that heard them. Meanwhile the curé was praying fervently that the sufferer might die before midnight. And at 11.55 precisely Philippe the Second, the last baron of La Gaulée, raised his eyes to Heaven and passed away without a struggle. So, by a happy chance, after so variegated an existence, he died in the odor of sanctity at last.

# THE Luck of the Keg: A Story of the Great Lakes, by Collins Shackelford *

DICK FREEMAN, late in the afternoon of November 30th, was, with many a snort and grunt, slowly working his way homeward over the great stretch of Lake Michigan beach at Zingypoor, pitting his twenty-eight years of sturdy growth against a fifty-mile-an-hour gale from the northwest. It was his last patrol of the season as one of the life-saving crew. The way was dismal and lonesome. The trunks of dead pines, blue-gray in their storm-polished nakedness, lay half-buried in the yellow sand by the water's edge; and here and there protruded huge timbers from long-forgotten wrecks. On his right were high sand dunes, furzy brown with spines of leafless trees moaning under the flailing of the storm: the wide sandy beach seemed, under the deceptive swayings of the broad patches of coarse grass, to be undulating southward. The lake had swallowed the copper-colored sun. All was so lonesome, so dismal as to give Dick "the blues" as to his future, now that Uncle Sam was done with him. It was while feeling the worst that he came upon a keg that was being rolled about by the waves on the steep slope of the beach. The curiosity instantly aroused in him banished the megrims.

"White lead or putty, it's worth the saving," he said to himself, and then made a dash for it, getting it ashore under the drench of a billow. While he was stooping, pushing and pulling it about to get an idea of the contents and weight, there slowly rose up out of a batch of intermingled weeds and

*Written for Short Stories.

beach-grass fifty feet away something his blurred eyes, blown into tearfulness by the wind, had taken to be a partly buried, partly burned tree. It was the figure of a tall woman, the noise of whose approach was deadened by the sand and the roar of the waves. Once within reach she gripped his jacket.

"I've been a-watching it," she shouted.

"The devil!" cried Dick, springing away in a fright.

"I'm bad enough, but not so bad as *that*," she laughed, as if his mistake were a good joke. "Can't you make out "Granny" Ransom in the dusk?" His answer was a growl of something unintelligible as he came back to his bit of jetsom and, nipping its chines with his finger-tips, raised it to his shoulder. She helped him adjust it in place.

"Pretty heavy, ain't it?" she asked. "Give a guess what's inside!"

"Maybe white lead, putty, nails—perhaps sand. How do I know?" He shook himself to shift the weight a little, made a step or two, but stopped when she caught his arm.

"I'm to share, ain't I? I saw it first and waited for you. I'll not be gouged out of my rights, Dick Freeman."

"You'll get 'em, Granny. Now look here! I'm late and you'll have to trot if you keep *me* company," and, weighted as he was, he began to sprint toward the lighthouse, whose lamp was glowing at the mouth of the river. But the tall, gaunt woman kept pretty close to him—all the time talking—begging and threatening, giving him a jumble of maledictions and questions; to all of which he gave no other notice than a grunt or a derisive laugh, whereat she would drop behind and threaten him with her fists.

The lighthouse and the keeper's dwelling were on a wind-swept hummock of sand. The great, wooded dunes were in front, across the narrow river; while miles of bleak, yellow acreage, dotted with stumps of pines, ran in huge furrows eastward; the lake was to the right. At the base of the lighthouse were twelve or fifteen shanties in which a few fisher-folk lived—dilapidated structures tangled up in seines and their drying-frames, oars, boats, and work sheds. In a few spots defiant bushes made a show of living in fish-fattened soil. On this shabby oasis, on this bleak coast line lived Dick with his widowed mother; a few rods from them was the habitation of "Granny" Ransom, who, old, friendless and forlorn, was kept alive mostly by the charity of her big-hearted neighbors.

Dick had let the old woman's tongue run wild as long as they were alone on the beach; but when they were across the river, among the houses, he bade her be quiet.

The command was given at her door in reply to a loud importunity as to her share, and a strident reiteration of her rights. All the way home he had studied over the question, and could admit no justice in her claim; he did not believe she had seen the keg until he brought it ashore. He told her so; her wrath flared up like lighted powder, and she was beginning to call down on him all sorts of maledictions when he bluntly cut her short with—"Shut up!" and moved away. She watched him until he had entered his own house.

"If I could only have seen the marks on that keg!" she said to herself. "I won't give up yet," and she sneaked away in the darkness toward Dick's shanty.

Mrs. Freeman was on the verge of going to pieces when Dick, damp and sand-plastered, came in with his load. She was a puny, slimpsy creature, ground to little more than a shadow by the constant attrition of wind, sand, and poverty, yet kept in working order by the intensity of her crude religious feelings, of which native conscience was the core. She shivered as her hand touched his wet clothing.

"Half drowned! poor boy," she said, adding, with a heavy sigh, "I'm always a-fearing you'll be coming in, some day, *all* drowned, as was your poor father."

"Well, I *am* rather wet; but that's what Uncle Sam expects of me. Here's a something the lake rolled at me. Look out!" He was trying to unload, but lost his grip: the keg fell at his mother's feet, burst open, and there was such a splash and gleam of coined money as to make the two cry out in surprise, and then to stare at each other in consternation and amazement.

"It's devil money, Dick; don't touch it!" she exclaimed in a weak voice as she sank down into her little rocking-chair. "It's one of his queer ways of temptation. Honest is, as honest got."

"Fudge!" cried Dick, with a laugh, plowing his foot into the heap. "It might be a dream if I couldn't kick it about. It's honest stuff, mother!" and he rang a coin on the table. "As for old Nick—well, if he wanted to do me a good turn why not let him?"

"Don't be that free-and-easy with him, Dick!" pleaded

the little woman. She really thought her son in danger; but he was not at all distressed by the sudden hazard and became business-like. First, he went to the door and reported to the station, not a hundred yards away, by a loud hallo. Coming back he locked the door—something seldom done—pinned the window shade hard down to the casing, put the lamp under the table the better to see the floor, and then, on his knees, traveled about in search of the run-away pieces of metal, until they were all in a heap. His work was performed with feverish haste, as if he were afraid a neighbor would be trying to come in before he was done. As he worked he told the story of his find to the limp, feebly protesting woman in the chair.

She came out of her torpor when he told of Granny Ransom's claim, for she disliked the old woman beyond measure.

"Don't you divide with her, Dick! Shake her off! She's a—a—one of them bats that suck people dry."

"Vampire," suggested Dick "I don't think she's in it, but I'll have to wait to find out. I must keep her tongue still, if I have to pay for it."

"Dick!" she called out after a couple of minutes' silence.

"Yes, mother."

"That money ain't yours, rightfully—you know it ain't," speaking with unnatural emphasis, her religious fervor working, like yeast, in the leaven of facts. "As you've found it, so somebody must have lost it."

"The lake, for instance," he remarked. "It was the last owner. It's my money, till somebody proves the contrary. Stick to it I will, so don't argue. Let's see how rich we are!" He tossed the débris of the keg into the shed, got an old, canvas shot bag and, coming back, sorted and counted the coin.

"Guess!" he said, after a silence, biting hard on the stub of his pencil to keep down his fever of delight.

"I want nothing to do with it," she said. "Your ruin be upon your own head, as you won't listen to me."

"Three thousand nine hundred and seventy-two dollars, sixty-seven cents," he called out, paying no attention to her speech, but scooping the money into the bag. "No more beach walking nor cleaning of fish for me. I'm glad of the chance of being ruined in this sort of way. As for you—well! we'll have that Trilly farm we've talked of so much, and—"

He went no further with his plans because there broke out directly under the floor a sneeze, coughs, the sounds of hard breathing, and thumps and rubs against the beams. Mrs. Freeman moaned and lay back in her chair, a hand over her pounding heart. Dick was on his feet instantly.

"A sneak!" he said, twisting the neck of the bag as he dropped it into his mother's lap. ("Devil's money" or not, she hid it with her apron.) He lighted a lantern and ran out to a place where a board in the skirting had fallen down and left an opening, into which he thrust his light, and against the face of someone crawling out.

"Granny Ransom, by thunder!" he shouted, as the old woman laboriously crept into the light.

"Yes, and she's heard everything," she said as she stood up and shook the sand out of her rags. "I'm on deck and aint' a-going to let you beat me, an old woman of eighty, out of her rights, as long as I have a tongue. You know I'm a rather lively talker, Dick."

"An ugly one, indeed," he replied. "Speak lower! I don't want the neighbors here."

"*I* do, if we can't agree. I want 'em to know you're trying to rob me."

" 'Tisn't necessary," leading her into the house, where she stood glaring at mother and son, in an attitude of fierce indecision, as if in doubt which to tackle first. She showed up in her tatters of faded black as a creature whose eighty years' fight for existence had made her a tough structure of flesh and fiber. She was above the height of ordinary women, her face big-featured and stern, the wide, toothless mouth ending in long, downward curves. Clutches of a thatch of coarse, gray hair stood out from under the red and ragged shawl on her head. Her face and hands were corduroyed with lines of murky blue veins; her eyes were wild animals in caves. She was as uncanny as would be an Egyptian mummy brought to life. Under her stare the little widow felt as if she were being throttled: unconsciously her hands went to her throat. The lantern dropped from Dick's hold and lay tiltingly on the head of the keg—it having escaped his eye. The old woman saw it; she brought it close to the light; her fingers went swiftly over the water-hardened, sand-polished bit of wood. She turned upon the two with exulting look and voice.

"It's all right. I'm dead sure now," she cried, and, going

to the stove, thrust the disc quickly into a bed of glowing coals.

"Sure of what?" Dick demanded.

"As to who's the owner. Oh, I've got you cornered, both of you. Old I may be, but nobody's fool. Why don't you ask me to sit down?" Dick offered her a chair.

"Give her everything—all—and get rid of her!" whined the widow, gripping the money-bag to toss it at her, if her son had but given the word.

"Nonsense-talk!" growled Dick.

"*Mine* isn't," the old woman retorted, her mouth getting a stern compression all of a sudden. "I'm for business, and you'll think so, too, when I tell the owner, and your neighbors and my nephew Von Proon up to Zeeland, about our find and your keep. You'll lose all, then," and she emphasized the prediction by thumping the parchment palm of one hand with the bony fingers of the other.

Dick said nothing; he was looking ahead, sizing up his predicament. He knew his rights in the matter; he knew, also, there'd be mighty little left him if he were compelled to use the law for defense. He weakened fast under "Granny's" threats.

"Name the owner!" Mrs. Freeman called out, very loudly for her, as if inspired.

"Why, that's my secret, my vise to squeeze you both," was the contemptuous reply. "But what's the use of using it?"

"There ain't any," said the young man, who had made up his mind which horn of the dilemma he would take. "We might as well be friends if it isn't too expensive—for me. What are your terms, Granny?"

She, too, had been figuring from the minute she knew what was in the keg, and spent no time, now, in deliberating.

"I don't want much, Dick—say something like this: every month, as long as I live, ten dollars. That ain't unreasonable."

"Umph!" Dick grunted, his manner one of doubt. "You're good for ten years more and that means twelve hundred dollars—nearly a third. Pretty high!"

"And I might die sooner—which I'm sure you wouldn't be sorry for—and then you'd be ahead," chuckled "Granny."

"And you'll give me the owner's name?" he inquired.

"Never! nor to anybody. That's my whip over you—that secret. Oh, I'm no fool!"

"We can advertise for him," piped up Mrs. Freeman.

"Bosh!" came from the old woman. "Try it, dearies, and

you'll have a hundred owners come at you. If it's a bargain, Dick, put it in writing!" He did it in three lines. She tucked the paper away in her rags.

"I suppose you're not afraid to let me look at that money—to touch it?" she remarked. "I'd really like to see what it feels like. She was back to her old ways of importuning though she had just won a victory.

Dick poured out the contents of the sack on the table. She scooped up the coins ravenously, tossing them by handfuls in the air.

"It's music—a whole orchestra—for me, who has to fight and lie and—sometimes steal to keep a miserable soul in this bare-boned body. I'm no saint," and she gave a look of scorn at the little widow. She poked at the money until she had picked out twenty halves. "These jingle nicely," she said, "and they'll go for the first payment. A gold piece would make people suspect."

The treasure pile had a strange influence over her, for at the door she turned and came back to the table to look down upon the gleaming heap longingly and sorrowfully, as upon someone dead, in a coffin. Reaching the threshold, she turned and stood erect and triumphant.

"I'm old, but nobody's fool," she cried, and, with a mocking laugh, slid into the darkness.

Dick, having bolted the door, again stood rubbing his hands absent-mindedly. His mother was not so passive. Her indignation dispelled her ailments, physical and spiritual, for the time being.

"I hope you are satisfied, Richard," she began, nervously polishing the arms of her chair with her hands. "You wouldn't take my advice, and so the old hag's got a mortgage on you—on your future. You can't see ahead as I do. Maybe that secret's a murder. How would you like that?" The young fellow, a scowl upon his face, went to the table and began to put the coin into the little bag, slowly, piece after piece. Already this little wealth was corroding their better natures; they had suddenly become ill-tempered, suspicious, antagonistic. When his mother hinted at murder Dick stopped his work.

"I hadn't thought of that," he said, idly pushing at the coins with his fingers. "She might know who did it, or have done it herself, years ago. Of course, she wouldn't tell. She's

'nobody's fool'—that's right; maybe I'm hers," angrily throwing down a handful of the money.

"I don't know whether I'm saying what's right or wrong," the mother continued, "but there was a story about the 'Granny' when we came to Zingypoor forty years ago—not a good story or it wouldn't have been town-talk; but I've forgotten it, and she's outlived and outstayed everybody but me. I wonder was it about a murder, and that money she was so quick to know about!" She dropped into a reverie over the perplexity; Dick was in one, from the first reference to a possible crime, studying contingencies. He dare not rely on his mother's memory—it was good for some things, doubtful on others—and have any baseless scruples stand between him and the use of what he had found; besides, he couldn't rid himself of the belief that "Granny" Ransom had been playing a bluff game, an idea that was exasperating. The latter he took as a conclusion.

"Don't discuss the matter any more, mother. I'm going to use this money and take chances against the old woman's past, present, and future. If there's an owner let him show up. We'll buy the Trilly farm, to-morrow, and you'll have a bit of happiness before you die. Now go to bed. Maybe you'll dream something pleasant out of this trouble of to-night." He gathered up the money, put the bag under his pillow, lay down without undressing and, incipient curse of wealth, did not sleep a wink the night long because of it. The next morning Dick had some strange news—Mrs. Ransom had gone to Zeeland to live; and, quick with his suspicions, he recalled that it was there her nephew, Von Proon, resided, and that he was a lawyer. He wondered why she went.

For the next five years Dick thriftily and profitably tilled the Trilly farm; every month "Granny" Ransom's stipend was sent to her, care of Von Proon, as she requested.

"She hangs onto life like a wild grape-vine to a dead tree," Dick would say, with a frown, "and I half believe she does it to spite me."

When the last payment for the fifth year was nearly due he made up his mind that, having business at Zingypoor (which he had kept away from ever since he had gone to farming), he would go from there to Zeeland, distant only a few miles, see how his human leech was getting on, try to settle with her for a

lump sum and, perhaps, get her to tell that secret of which she had made so much in her deal with him and about which he still had a lively curiosity. His journey was a series of infuriating surprises. At Zingypoor he learned that Mrs. Ransom had come back within two days after he and his mother had departed, and—he raved when he fairly compassed the deception—had been dead nearly three years: he was far from being angry at her decease, but because Von Proon had been easily and neatly swindling him by taking the dead woman's income. He lost no time in going to Zeeland. Von Proon, a short, fat, pudding-shaped man of perhaps sixty years, smiled blandly under Dick's storm of epithets, and, when he had a chance to put in a word or two, remarked:

"It's all right, Freeman. It's been kept sort of quiet, but I was her son by her first marriage. All she had to leave me was the secret—yours and hers"—smiling significantly—"*and what it brought.*"

"You've had your last dollar of it," roared Dick as he stamped toward the door.

"But not of yours," retorted the other quickly.

"Only a change of bosses," was Dick's thought as he hurried away from sight and sound of the attorney. "Looks as if he thought he could pinch me with the mystery of that keg. 'Twon't work. I'll just set up a lawyer against him. It'll be 'dog eat dog,' I suppose."

Zingypoor was such a spare-rib sort of a place as to have only one lawyer. Judge Egglestone, a recent comer, from the county-seat. Dick knew him by hearsay only; but to him he related his trouble. The old gentleman listened, at first, with eyes closed, and twiddled his fingers as if they were doing his thinking; but at the point that told of the counting of the money he suddenly sat erect, all apparent indifference gone.

"That amount again!" he abruptly demanded. Dick gave it.

"Deuced odd!" exclaimed the judge; "yet that tallies with mine to a cent. But proceed!"

As the story went on he nodded his head here and there. Each minute he showed more and more nervousness, yet did not interrupt.

"I'll bet that was my money!" he exclaimed, when the narrative was concluded. Dick, startled, sprang to his feet.

"I don't understand," he gasped.

"Sit down again," said the judge, "and I'll explain—tell you why I think that way. It's a little story, but with a mighty long tail, it seems. It happened in the spring of the second year of the Civil War. I was in the lumber business then, and had a camp up near Muskegon. I owned, also, the schooner *Milo Tappan*. A man named Ransom—Pop Ransom we used to call him, because he drank more pop than whisky—was her captain. His wife—a tall, mannish woman—went along as cook; she was a 'terror,' according to the crew. On the second trip of the *Tappan* I sent just such a keg as you describe containing exactly that amount of money, in coin, to pay off the men in camp. It never got there, nor the vessel either. The latter, during a storm, struck a sand bar at Grand Haven and went to pieces. The men got ashore all right, but they didn't bring the keg of money, for it couldn't be found."

"Nor the woman—the cook?" Dick broke in, wondering if she wasn't saved.

"Neither woman nor keg," laughed the judge. "Now that would have been a very mysterious omission, if the former hadn't floated ashore at Zingypoor, the night before, astride the bottom of an overturned yawl. She wouldn't tell how or why this happened; but there was a story among the crew—though not one of them would swear to it—that the night of the storm the captain put his wife and the keg into the yawl and set it adrift. You can draw your own conclusions: mine were that Ransom and his wife tried to steal the money and didn't succeed. That's the old woman's secret, which, of course, she wouldn't tell."

"Well, I suppose I must make terms with you—about the money, I mean," said Dick, with almost a groan.

"Not a bit of it," replied the judge. "I was insured—vessel and treasure—and got my insurance."

"Then I must deal with the insurance company," and Dick gave another groan.

"You can't!" Egglestone declared. "That concern went out of business over twenty years ago. The money's yours, clean and clear. And if Von Proon bothers you refer him to me. I've the medicine that'll fix him."

But Dick never heard from him.

# MY Little Affair With the Basques: A Story of the Peninsular War, by C. Edwardes*

"TOLLINGTON," said the Duke to me (though he wasn't a duke really till a year later) one blazing day early in July, 1813, when he had caught me yawning on the river side of the Chofres—as pretty a mark for a Frenchman t'other bank of the river as well could be—"you can spend your time for the nation better than that. Step this way."

Sabre-point! I don't suppose a man in the army—ay, in both armies—felt more ashamed of himself at that moment. To be dropped on like a loafer! And yet, when you came to the truth, we were most of us having an idle time then, waiting for the river to dry up to give us a decent chance of a crossing. Rey, the Governor of San Sebastian's fort La Mota, knew we had a warm thing on; and all the Frenchies were taking a rest. It wasn't their business to waste ammunition until they'd got something solid and red to pepper at; for they couldn't tell how soon our authorities at home were going to wake up and send the General the ships he hungered for, to block the town seawards and stop that confounded dribble landwards from French ports of belly-cheer and powder, which made some of us weep—that is, grind our teeth—at such a missing of opportunities.

I jumped up as if I had got another bullet in the mere meat of my leg. Vittoria, a month ago, had treated me to that pleasure, and the bit of lead itself was laid by for my wee daughter Molly to play with, if so be I might get home a sound man and not a white-haired, old cripple, with the very lead itself melted in my pocket from old age and the heat of count-

*From Chambers's Journal.

less summers in Spain. For who could tell how long we were to be fighting battles for the Dons, and what trouble their pig-headed ingratitude might land us in, ere the peace was signed?

"Your humble servant, sir!" I said, saluting, and thinking to myself that it was all up with my hopes of an adventure for the next three months. The General was going to punish me by putting me on commissariat work: that, or prisoners' guard, or worse still. But devil a bit of that it was, praised be his lordship for his ripe good sense!

"You're the only man in my army, Tollington, who gets fat on exercise," said the Duke, dryly.

He said that, turned to see which of his suite had laughed, and then turned to the other side to see what Sir Tom Ryle meant by daring to warn *him* about anything.

A round-shot splintered a few square yards of granite close to the left of us, making one man sing out and hop into the air. Those artful beggars had sighted us, and found the temptation irresistible—that was all; and enough, too, if they had shoved their gun's muzzle an inch or two more to the south. Then, by my faith! there would have been no Wellington at Waterloo, and my little Molly would have had her flaxen pigtail tied with crape inside a month, and be crying in her leisure moments, "Oh, my poor daddy!"

"From the Mirador, sir," said Sir Tom.

But the Duke said nothing; he just jerked his head at me, and I followed him, the others drawing apart. And, in the words of the Scriptures, my heart leaped within me, for I knew by the lie of his lips that he'd been looking for some one to do special service, and had now found just that same suitable person.

"Tollington, you know the Basques, I think," he said, quickly. "I want you to get off at once to Olazazagua yonder —he nodded towards the Pyrenees—"and use your wits. You *have* brains as well as stomach, when you like to use them, and I request you to use them in thorough earnest, sir, on this occasion. The safety of my rear depends on your activity and intelligence."

That was proud hearing. If I beamed thanksgivings in the General's face, who can blame me? I'd have kissed his hand as soon as the Pope's toe at that moment, which, for a conscientious Catholic, is saying no small thing, let me tell you.

"Are you following me, sir?" he inquired sharply, with the clink of bright steel in his voice.

"Yes, sir," said I.

"Very well; be off with you. Those infernal rascals with the infernal language of their own are playing crooked, as usual. I can't be hampered by them at this stage of the campaign, when—— But never mind that. Get to this place, Olazazagua, and say 'Adam and Eve' to Father Dinis, who has the souls of the villagers in his keeping. He takes British pay, and has done nothing for it hitherto. What there is to tell, presumably, he will tell you. If you have any reason to believe he is trying any traitorous dodges on me, you are empowered to punish him as a traitor *after* you have summed up the situation. I believe some four thousand of the rascals are massed by that village. It's unaccountable that Dinis has held his tongue about it. Find out their game and report to me in person as speedily as possible. Do you understand me?"

"Perfectly, General."

"Then good morning. Of course, you will make up as a Basque. You're shaped like one. That's all."

He gave me the curtest of flourishes and rejoined his staff; and I, knowing my General, didn't say another word, but just started for camp to get into stockinged legs and don flat cap and one of those amazing thick cloaks with which the delicate mountain Ajaxes keep the damp out of their precious throats. I accounted myself about half a dead man already; but that made no difference to my feet. They and the rest of me had just been fretting for an adventure, and here we had it offered to us in rare measure, brimful and running over.

It was to be yet again that cheerful and invigorating alternative, "Success or Death; but Failure never!" Put the words in Latin and you have the motto of the house of Tollington, than which there is none more honorable in all Ireland, from Antrim's Head to Ballydavid by Dingle Bay.

In less than half an hour I was a Basque to the life, barring my thoughts and my soul; and cursing that cloak—ay, and even the bit of a net-bag in which I carried my bread-and-cheese, and the straw glove that was to do more for me in this joke, I reckoned, than even the General's passwords, "Adam and Eve." Faith, too! I'd got my shillelagh as well, and no weapon else. They're a smart lot with the stick and the ball

in these chestnutty mountains of Biscaya, and I trusted fully as much to my own accomplishments in these matters as to Father Dinis of Olazazagua for my body's salvation and the good work I was to do for the British army.

You see, I'd had the luck early in this pestilent Spanish war to be captured and held fast Zumarraga way for nigh on a year while the rest of us were enjoying times in Portugal; and, as my method was, I'd made myself much at home in the highland village where I was a prisoner. I could patter enough of their mysterious lingo to serve my turn; and I had proved myself a wonderful *pelota* man. It was this last that got me my freedom, and now I meant to see what it could do for me in the more northern parts of this same muddled little land of mountains and conceited peasants with the pedigrees and blazonry of princes.

It was not far I pushed that night, maybe five miles past the farthest of our outposts. 'Twas as a wandering idiot man that they made me welcome in the village where I passed the night. I thanked them for that hint, and had no difficulty all the next day in leading every Biscayan I met to believe I was one of the greatest idiots, loose on his travels to avoid the heat of the lowlands.

I'm not saying this state of things was flattering to me. It was not, indeed. But it served me.

It was escorted by two ladies as broad as long that on the second night I came among the dark houses and broad eaves of Olazazagua, with the chestnut trees all round it, and merry trout streams lacing the fields, with the white tents of a small army set amid the meadow flowers.

"The poor fool is on a pilgrimage—he has no friends," said one of these gracious dames to the first Olazazagua man we met.

"And," said the other, even more graciously, "though it is impossible a brainless man can commit guilty sins, he does nothing in the world but ask for Father Dinis of Olazazagua. He says no one but Father Dinis can give him a white soul again."

The Olazazagua man made a coarse remark about the size of my stomach and laughed. "Father Dinis is busy with the soldiers," he said. "Besides, there is a *romeria* (saints'-day fair) this afternoon, with games, and his reverence has much money on two of the contests. He has no time for

fools. I'll take the booby to a house where there is another one like him, and in the morning, perhaps, the priest may spare him ten minutes for confession."

I went with this Olazazagua man like a pet lamb led by a string, feeling finely stirred by the sight of these martial goings-on.

"What is it?" I asked, with a clumsy jibber, pointing to the troops on the green.

"Ha! he!" laughed my man. "The English shall learn what it is, all in our good time, my poor fool."

This said, the rascal made a dive at my bag and pulled out my *pelota* glove; then he stood still and bellowed; and, having bellowed his breath away, he shouted in a whisper, and a number of men as black-browed and broad-chested as himself, with their ugly womenkind to match, came running from their houses and porch seats to see what the matter was.

My glove was the matter, and the questions they threw at me showed that if I were a fool I had suddenly become a respectable one.

They asked me if I was for the contest that afternoon, and if I was, perchance, the champion from Bilbao who was expected to try and take the conceit out of their own pet, one Juan Gorostegui—bless his father for giving him such a name!

But to all this never a plain word said I. My thoughts were hard at work, and, mind you! it was early to change my character all at once.

And so the hubbub echoed off, and I was taken to a house set on the hillside, above the village, where I found my fellow-fool; and the sight of him gave me a small shock, for he was an unmistakable Frenchy, with irons on his legs, and a volley of *sacrés* when he saw my conductor. An ape-faced woman had him in charge—a woman with arms and shoulders like an artilleryman's; and to her my man said, as he passed me in, "Another babe for you to suckle, mother." With that, ere I'd got my senses properly ranged, I, too, was seized and chained up like a wild beast out of a forest.

Before he left the house the man explained that martial law of a very fierce kind would be in vogue in Olazazagua for the next few days. All strangers, fools or otherwise, were to be secured until the Basque army had set forth to have its cut at my lord by the Urumea; and, though I spoke Basque

of a sort, they were obliged to do their duty even toward a poor fool like me.

"That is, if you are sure you are not the Chiquito from Bilbao?" he finished.

And then, faith! I made my stroke. "It's just that same I am," I said; "only a fever has bewitched my head and made me the sick man I am. This and the trouble of getting past the outposts of the soldiers by the sea."

That staggered him.

"It's Father Dinis who'll know best what you are," quoth he, and left me with my companion. The old woman went out to shell beans, and straight the Frenchy aired his tongue to me.

The language he used was very bad even for a man of his nation. He cursed the Basques hip and thigh, root and branch, from priest downward; and most he cursed them for their brazen treachery

Having got thus far, and astonished me with the news that he had come to Olazazagua on purpose to instigate them to take just the step they were taking on their own initiative, and had, nevertheless, been shut up as a spy, this Captain Delaforte told me a great thing. I reckon he really was a fool, or disappointment had watered his brain. That and the comfort of finding that I could understand his dear Paris talk greased his tongue famously.

"Once let me get out of this satanic village," he cried, "and I've the most certain plan in my head for blowing Lord Wellington's army to perdition. It came to me last night when I was fighting the fleas. I shall tell it you straight that you may see why I'm so uneasy. There is the aqueduct. It runs underground where the British position is. *Voilà!* With the powder, and a company of fine spirits like myself, the thing is done!"

Faith! I gaped at the donkey as if I saw no sense in him; but I bottled up the idea and—then forgot it, for there were visitors at the door, and with them a fat, turnip-headed man, in a shovel hat, whom I guessed to be my Father Dinis.

"Welcome!" said he, slyly, making the sign of the cross and screwing up his eyes at me.

It was on my tongue to cry out "Adam and Eve" there and then; but the temper of the Frenchman gave me wisdom. Like enough he had come with credentials from Governor Rey

as good as mine from Lord Wellington. And what better should I be then?

So I just stuck to my fib about the *pelota* business. If his reverence liked, I would show him a specimen of my stroke, asking him to make allowance for the weak state of my head. And was it not a wonderfully unkind thing that I should be chained up for just nothing at all, at all, as if I, too, were a bloody-minded soldier engaged in the devastation of the country?

That scored.

With his own hands Father Dinis freed me. He *was* a sly one. He tried to pump me about what I had seen on the coast, but I had seen nothing except my feet on the white roads. And then, sure enough, he let out his rascally secret.

"On your return to Bilbao, my son," he said, "you shall see the bones of many an Englishman, if Heaven so wills it to help us."

"Amen!" said I; "if Heaven so wills it."

"You will return no champion of Olazazagua, Hernani; but that is what you shall see, my son," he said on, with an oily wink.

For two pins I could have got at his throat and settled him at that moment, so mad was I with him for hoaxing the General. But a wiser instinct controlled me, and I was soon doing my best to revive the skill as a *pelota* player which had done me so good a turn three or four years earlier. Maybe a hundred folks watched me; and the most of them laughed. They did not reckon I should beat their Gorostegui if I played no better than that. But I kept my underhand volleys up my sleeve, as it were; the more resolutely, too, when I heard my friend, the priest, gloating for all hearers about the bets he had certainly won. He had backed Gorostegui heavily, and he offered odds of three to one now against me.

They do this kind of thing in Biscaya, priests and people, quite as a matter of course. But Father Dinis was an out-and-outer.

The time passed merrily now until the games. Had the Olazazagua wine been stronger than it was, faith! it's not sure I am I could quite so handsomely have kept up my part of the sun-struck Chiquito from Bilbao. They petted me finely, did the men who had put their money on me from sheer

respect for the Chiquito's reputation. But I kept my head clear, for how knew I that at any instant this confounded Bilbao man might not turn up and make things blue for me? Moreover, I had to get back to the camp without loss of time.

As to the ways and means of this, my brains were bothering about them even when that tournament in the *pelota* court had begun. I didn't see my way that day, bedad! for there was to be a rare banquet to wind up the evening. And in the morning those Basque warriors were to march!

But let me move now at the trot. Somehow the spirit of the game caught me when I had lost forty points to Gorostegui's twenty-eight. I recovered my knack at the *cruzado* deliveries, and in a quarter of an hour the tables were being turned. How the fellows did roar their applause! And how uncomfortably Father Dinis nursed his blue chin and stared!

Another quarter of an hour and my side had run out a winner on the fifty points, leaving the Olazazagua champion and his dummy colleague staggered at thirty-five. I had done more. In the excitement of my joy (plus a little wholesome revenge) I had wound up the victory by a stinging and artful side-stroke which sent the ball, hard as a cannon-shot, at the head of Father Dinis himself. His reverence was lying with a brain concussion, and I was wearing my laurels with what grace I could.

It was about eleven o'clock, under half a moon, that I slipped out of the village. Walking all night, I sighted the sea when the sun had been up a dangerous number of hours; and then, a weary but proud man, I sought out the General and made my report. I told him, besides, what I had made up my mind to tell him about that unlucky Frenchman's idea of the aqueduct. And faith! that's maybe where I made the mistake; for, though it led to the famous mine of the 25th, and the simultaneous attack over the river, we didn't make much profit out of either the one or the other. Lieutenant Reid got more credit for his crawl up the pipe of the aqueduct than Captain Tollington (though it's I that say it), who suggested it all. 'Tis ever the way: you must be successful if you want to succeed; and this one bad egg a little spoiled my credit for the Olazazagua business.

Mentioned in the despatches? To be sure I was; and the

General himself said, "Well done!" to me. But this was all the direct reward I got for those three days' work; this, and a gratified conscience, which is a good thing for anyone to have, man or boy.

The news reached us later that Father Dinis died of his hurt brain and annoyance at the defeat of the Basques, when these came down their hills like ants into the ambush which, thanks to me, was prepared for them. Well, he deserved to die for his crookedness, and that's all about it.

# Prince and the Unexpected: The Story of a Royal Romance, by Daisy Hugh Pryce*

"TALKING of court scandals and royal marriages," said Baron Brock, "have I ever told you the story of the extraordinary marriage to which I was an unwilling witness when I was in office at Altenwaldau? Ah, well! There is hardly time now, but I think it might interest you, and I have it all written down in the journal I kept at the time. It forms a curious little romance of history, and some time or other I will let you see it."

The Baron did not forget his promise, and subject to the provision of respect for political exigencies by the due suppression of all real names and places, I obtained his permission to relate the story and make what extracts I pleased from his own detailed account.

The kingdom of Altenwaldau—explains the Baron in his journal—is one of the oldest of all the small States of South Germany, but owing to the diversion of half its lands into the possession of the Dukes of Hohenstaufen, it was, for nearly a hundred years, one of the smallest. At the time when I entered the service of Ludwig IX., the reigning King of Altenwaldau, the last representative of the rival branch of the house was a youthful duchess, who lived under the guardianship of her mother in the castle of Hohenstaufen; and King Ludwig had set his heart upon regaining the lost lands by a match between his son and heir, Prince Waldemar, and the little Duchess Carola. Unfortunately, there were difficulties in the way. The Dowager-Duchess Sophia, who had been left regent and guardian, was no friend to King Ludwig. She was a haughty and violent-tempered woman, and there had been many pas-

*From Temple Bar.

sages at arms between them. The Prince, too, was ten years older than his selected bride, and at the time when she was a featureless, short-haired little girl, diligently toiling over her lesson books, he was a gallant and handsome young man who had fallen deeply in love with one of the beauties of his father's court. That episode came to an abrupt end through the sudden and unexpected marriage of the lady to a stranger from the Austrian court, and except the old King, no one ever quite knew the rights of the affair, but it left the Prince an altered character. The brightness and gayety of his youth were suddenly extinguished, and at the age of twenty-eight he was a melancholy and disappointed man, with a stately and impassive manner, and a habit of silence that kept him very much aloof from the ladies of the court.

I liked him—I liked him from the first moment I saw him—and it was probably on account of my known friendship and supposed influence with him that King Ludwig did me the honor to select me as the Prince's companion and counselor on the important occasion of his first visit to Hohenstaufen It was ostensibly no more than an informal hunting visit, but the young Duchess was close upon her eighteenth birthday, and her consequent coming of age, and no one could have been ignorant of the real import of our visit. Prince Waldemar himself was well aware of his father's wishes, and, considering the strained relations between them, I was somewhat surprised at his acquiescent attitude.

"I am merely a pawn in the political game," he remarked, dispassionately, "and it is a matter which affects the welfare of the State. I have got to pay the price of the position, and so long as I hold it I have no right to object."

The Prince was melancholy, without being bitter, and there was much that was noble and high-minded about him. In the dignity of his demeanor there might be a touch of hauteur, but that was the natural consequence of a difficult position and a cruel experience. He never failed in courtesy, and his servants and retinue were devoted to him. I, who knew better than anyone else how far he had been the victim of the King's intrigues, had especial reason for being sorry for him, and it was not without trepidation that I looked forward to the proposed expedition.

On the night before we started, in a private audience with the King, I received instructions which startled and shocked me.

"You are to push this matter as far as you possibly can," said the King. "Do not be satisfied with a betrothal only, but bring it to a bond which cannot be broken—a marriage, if possible."

"But, your Majesty—between persons of such rank—the necessary preliminaries—the difficulties!" I stammered in amazement.

The King frowned, and bent his keen eyes forbiddingly upon me. "I know all that," he said, "but much can be done by diplomacy and good management. The threads will be in your hands, and I trust to you the weaving of them. The Prince is Quixotic and chivalrous—the girl is young and easily managed. I have secret information of a plot on the part of her uncle, the Count Latouschka, to secure her for his son, and there is no time to be lost. He has great influence with the old Duchess, and she bears me a grudge for the course I took in discrediting her marriage—she would be quite capable of sacrificing her daughter in order to pay off that old score."

"Was there any irregularity about her marriage, your Majesty?"

"Well, I suppose it was nothing serious. But it was a secret marriage—privately performed by some stray priest, and for years nobody knew of it. The old Duke Rudolf was over seventy years of age, and it was thought that on his death the estates would lapse to the elder branch of the family. Naturally it was something of a shock to me when he suddenly produced a wife and child, and I caused inquiries to be made, but nothing came of them—except ill-will on the part of the Duchess."

"She will surely forget that, in her desire to secure a brilliant match for her daughter."

"It is possible. But she is a very selfish, bad-tempered woman, and she may wish to keep the estates in her own family. That danger must be guarded against, and as speedily as possible. Of course you understand that such informalities as might hasten the match, while they are to be secretly aimed at and encouraged, must appear as if they were accidental and entirely outside our wishes and intentions."

I understood one thing but too well. The King, as usual, was bent upon some piece of crooked policy, and I should have a difficult, and perhaps dangerous, part to play. I heartily wished myself out of it, but I knew that remonstrance was

useless, and there was nothing for it but to do as I was told, and hope for the best.

We started at nine o'clock next morning, and did the first part of the journey by rail, but when we reached the frontier of Hohenstaufen we seemed to have come to the last outpost of civilization. The railway did not extend beyond it, and the carriage road leading to the old schloss thirty miles away ran through a wild, uninhabited country of mountains and forests, with precipices, defiles, deep ravines and rushing mountain streams. The road was a good one, however; so splendidly engineered that in the steepest ascents the horses were able to keep up a steady trot, and about half-way up we came to a little hunting-box, where we stopped to change horses and have lunch.

It was a severely plain stone building with a single bare and desolate sitting-room that was evidently hardly ever used, but it was built on a high crag overhanging the road, and commanded a magnificent view. The Prince stood at the window, and gazed at the wild woods and mountains with fascinated interest and pleasure.

"It was an unequal division!" he remarked. "Altenwaldau, with its wealth of vineyards and cornlands; and Hohenstaufen, with its rocks and streams and pine-covered mountains—but I know which I would have chosen!"

"They went well together, your Highness," I said; "pity was that they should ever have been divorced!"

He looked at me with a quick turn of the head, and a smile, half-humorous, half-rueful. "Well," he said, "let us hope that they may be once more united in the future."

We had left the little gray schloss far behind us, and were penetrating into a region that grew ever wilder and more picturesque. The road ran up like a white ribbon under the hanging woods, and seemed to follow the course of a rushing stream down in the gorge below. Up, up, we mounted, ever higher into the deep woods, and the drive seemed very long. The dusk was falling when the towers of Schloss Hohenstaufen at last came in sight, and the massive fortress holding the gate of the gorge looked forbiddingly grim and gloomy in the waning light of the evening. Passing under its heavy portals, and across the rude drawbridge, one felt as if one had suddenly been transported into some scene in medieval history, and the impression was confirmed by the manner of our reception.

The Dowager-Duchess stood at the head of the great stone stairs to welcome us, with her little court around her, and a row of red-coated lackeys holding aloft lighted tapers in many branched silver candelabra on either side. I looked first at her, and was instantly repelled by her coarse, over-blown face and arrogant manner. Her brother, the Count Latouschka, who stood near her, was a tall, thin man, with a foxy face, and dark, malicious-looking eyes. I did not like him any better, but as soon as I saw the little Duchess Carola I felt reassured.

She, at least, was all that could be wished. She was not exactly beautiful—her figure was a little too short for that—but she had a charming little face, quite dazzlingly fair, with a wealth of shining golden curls all around it, and her expression of sweet and happy confidence was extremely attractive.

I watched her during the formal festivities of that first evening, and decided that the Prince was more fortunate than he could have dared to hope. She was shy, but only prettily so, and when the Prince spoke to her, she looked up and responded eagerly with a blush and beaming bright eyes. Count Latouschka might scowl, but in comparison with the Prince, the claims of his son, the Count Stefan, to be regarded as a suitable match for the young heiress were at a discount. Count Stefan, himself, was visibly conscious of the fact, and he watched the Prince with lowering brows as he conversed with the little Duchess. The Count was like his father, of the same unprepossessing foxy type, but he looked more passionate and less astute. At the end of the evening, when the ladies had retired, and most of the men had adjourned to the smoking-room, I found an opportunity of speaking to him, and I was not more favorably impressed by his conversation than by his looks.

"Can you explain to me the use of this most curious instrument, Count Stefan?" I asked.

We were in a room that was fitted up more like an armory than a smoking-room, and the walls were covered with all kinds of archaic weapons of offense. Here and there, standing out like specters from this grim background, were the vacant visors of what looked like knightly figures in armor of chain and mail, but what had attracted my particular attention was a headpiece of black iron that was peculiarly heavy and solid.

"That?" asked Count Stefan. "Oh, yes, that is a curious instrument. I believe it is unique, having been manufactured

by its inventor for a special purpose. It is called the helmet of darkness, and has this peculiar property, that whoever is shut into it will never see light again."

"What!" I exclaimed. "Is it an instrument of torture?"

"Look here," said the Count, and as he pressed a spring at the side of the helmet, I saw that from the eye-sockets of the iron face, the strangely protruding eyeballs disappeared, and shot out at the back in the form of bolts of polished steel. They were gouges of the rudest and cruelest description, and their relentless mechanical action upon the eyes of any unhappy victim was horrible to think of.

"It fits the head tightly, you see, and the closing of the hinges is enough to act upon the spring at once. An ingenious device, isn't it? Would you care to try it?"

There was a disagreeable smile on the Count's face as he put this insolent question, but I was saved the necessity of answering him by the interposition of the castle chaplain, who had evidently overheard some part of our colloquy, and came up with a nervous exclamation.

"*Gott bewahr*, Herr Graf!" he ejaculated, in the thick Low German of the country. "That casque is too dangerous to be meddled with as a plaything, and the days of such wicked punishments are over for ever."

"Are you so sure?" sneered the Count. "What guarantee can you give for it—considering the case of a certain mad monk that you know of?"

The chaplain shrank back with a look of terror and consternation. He was a curious-looking, attenuated old man, with a very long, forward-craning neck, weak and watery prominent blue eyes, and a scanty fringe of wiry gray hair round a bald head. I had noticed him at dinner, sitting at the bottom of the table, and looking as if he were scared by some skeleton at the feast that he alone could see.

But I was sure now that he did know something, and the recollection of certain sinister rumors connected with Schloss Hohenstaufen impelled me to inquire further.

"To what do you allude, Count?" I asked. "Do you mean to tell me that this diabolical invention of the fourteenth century has ever been used in recent times?"

Count Stefan laughed, and looked at me with an expression of mingled mischief and menace.

"Most certainly it has!" he said. "But you must not

question me too closely about recent times, for I could not answer you without indiscretion. The Herr Capellan here will tell you the history of the machine so far as it is expedient that it should be known."

The Count moved away, leaving me with the chaplain, who plunged hastily into ancient history.

"It is, as your Excellency has rightly divined, an invention of the fourteenth century, and, as Count Stefan observed, it is unique of its kind. It was made for the first baron of this house, and it is said, whether truly or not I cannot say, that upon a pretense of reconciliation, he invited a rival to a feast, and induced him afterwards to try on this helmet, thereby destroying his sight and his reason. It is only a tradition, of course, but it is certain that the Baron Hildebrand was a man of very evil character, and capable of any crime. He was himself an expert armorer, and I will show you some remarkable weapons here said to have been forged by him."

I scarcely listened to the chaplain's patter, and his efforts to draw my attention away from the helmet only made me the more curious about it.

"What was the case of the mad monk of which the Count spoke?" I asked, recurring to the subject. "I see that you really do know something, and I should like to hear. Has this wicked punishment ever been inflicted by the Duchess Sophia?"

"Hush, hush!" cried the old priest, glancing hurriedly round with a look of terror. "It is a thing one dares not think of, far less speak of, in this house. Count Stefan must have been mad to mention it, but he is capable of any madness in his jealous passions!"

The chaplain was strongly agitated, but we were alone at that end of the dimly lighted room, and there was no one within earshot. He was a weak-minded old man, and after another furtive glance round, he said:

"I know nothing—nothing certainly—but you will drive far into the forests to-morrow, and if you go far enough you will come to a ruined pavilion so closely hidden by the rocks and trees that the sun never shines upon it. In that building there is imprisoned a mad monk, who is also blind, and it is said—it is whispered—that he threatened something to our gracious Herrin, some insult so dreadful that he incurred the punishment of the casque. She was justly incensed, no

doubt, but it is a terrible punishment. Blind and mad—blind and mad!"

The old priest again glanced round with frightened, wandering eyes, and it seemed to me that his own mind was a little unhinged. I asked him what the insult was, but he did not know. If he had known I thought he would have told me, for he seemed incapable of keeping a secret. Did Count Stefan know this, and had he raised the subject in order to intimidate me, or had his behavior been merely the result of reckless ill-temper? I could not tell.

The incident had certainly produced a sinister impression on my mind, but I said nothing to the Prince that night, and in the morning the utterances of an old priest and an ill-tempered boy seemed of little importance.

It was the first day of a three days' battue got up in our honor, and after an early breakfast we started off, driving in breaks and open carriages to some distant woods where game of all kinds was extraordinarily plentiful. It was a glorious autumn day, and the woods were in their fullest splendor of gold and crimson. The country was certainly very beautiful, the sport was all one could wish for, and the picnic lunch, served by green-coated Jagers in a clearing of the woods, was made delightful by the presence of the ladies.

The Prince devoted himself to the young Duchess with marked attention, and never, since the unfortunate episode which had closed the days of his youth, had I see him evince so much gayety and good-fellowship. That evening, when he led out the Duchess Carola to open the dance, the young couple were followed by the significant glances of the whole little court, and later on, when I saw them in conversation together in a corner of the ball-room, I felt that all was going on as well as I could have wished.

Two days went by—two brilliant, successful days of the finest hunting that had ever fallen to my lot—and I had almost forgotten the dark sayings of Count Stefan and the chaplain, when I came by chance upon the ruined pavilion in the woods. It was the last day of the hunt, and I had wandered alone a little farther than the rest of the party. I did not see the building until I was under its walls, so closely was it hidden by the rocks and the overhanging trees, but that it was the pavilion of which the chaplain had spoken I had not a doubt,

and I immediately resolved to explore the place so as to discover if the rest of his story were true.

What happened was like a dream. The place seemed utterly empty and deserted. The columns of the portico were broken down, and overgrown with creepers, and the roofless vestibule was filled up with a thicket of briars and brambles. It seemed as if no human being could inhabit such a place, but going round to the back of the building I observed a narrow path which looked as if it were occasionally used, and following that, I came to a ruined room which had one corner bricked across and roofed over so as to form a shelter for an animal. There was some living creature inside, I felt convinced, for listening at the low, padlocked door, I could hear the scuffling sound of dry leaves being trampled under foot.

"Who is there?" I called out boldly.

There was a moment's silence, and I repeated my question, and then a voice replied with a frightful wailing scream like no human voice I had ever heard.

"I—the most miserable wretch in all the world. Enter, whoever you are, and behold my misery."

The door was strongly padlocked, but I saw that the staple driven into the wall was insecure, and with the leverage of a thick stick, and the exertion of a little strength, I soon succeeded in forcing it out. Then I pushed open the rickety door and went in, but I started back in dismay at the sight that met my eyes. The place was almost dark, but a little stream of light from a slit in the outer wall fell full upon a tattered and emaciated figure standing barefooted on a bed of straw and dry leaves. The face was almost covered with wild, unkempt gray hair, and in the midst of the bristly tangle were two ghastly, deep and sunken cavities where the eyes of the man should have been. As my own eyes became accustomed to the dim light, I perceived that the wretched prisoner had an iron belt tightly riveted round his middle, and fastened to this was a long chain securing him to a staple in the wall, but permitting him to pace up and down within the narrow limits of his cell.

"Who are you?" I asked; "and what have you done to be imprisoned here in such misery?"

"I have told you, I am the unhappiest wretch in all the world," he answered wildly. "What my name is matters not,

and as for what I have done—there is only one person who ought to know that, and to be able to confess to him I would give my life."

"Who is that person?" I asked.

"King Ludwig of Altenwaldau," was the astonishing answer.

"King Ludwig?" I exclaimed.

"Yes—do you know him? Oh, if you do, I beseech you to help me! I have a confession hidden here which I have wanted to send to him for ten years. I have been prevented, but I have the paper safe still. Will you take it—will you give it him, and will you do it without looking at the contents?"

I hesitated. It was probably only some folly of the crazy brain, but Ludwig loved nothing so much as a mystery, and there was the possibility that it might be a secret he would like to know. At any rate it could do him no harm, and I could explain why I had sent it.

"You won't tell your secret to me?" I said. "I have access to the King, and could speak for you better than anyone else."

"I cannot tell you," said the man, "I can tell no one but the King himself, but if you have access to him, I entreat you to give him the paper. For God's sake, do not refuse the prayer of a dying man!"

"I could do it for you," I said, "and I will—if you can assure me by all that you hold sacred that no harm will come of it to the King."

"No harm, but only good. I swear it in the Virgin's holy name."

"Then I will take charge of it for you, and your secret will be safe in my care. I will not pry into it."

"Oh, praise be to Heaven, which has granted my prayers at the last! I am dying—I am dying fast, and I had lost all hope. I thought I should die with the guilt of that unconfessed crime upon my soul, and without chance of pardon or redemption, but you have come to save me. You promise that no other eye than the King's shall see what I send?"

I formally gave my word, and then the poor prisoner turned to the darkest corner in the hut, and from between some loose stones in the wall took out a packet so worn and dirty that it hardly looked like paper, but was a folded sheet carefully tied up and sealed.

"I wrote it before my fate came upon me," he said "but I

felt that I ought to tell her I was going to send it, and then—then—ah! it is ten years ago, and I have suffered so much! Surely my agonies will count as an atonement?"

He turned his sightless face toward me, and I was consumed with pity for the poor wretch. Crazy he might be, but if he had lost his reason with his sight through the agency of that diabolical machine—my blood ran cold at the thought—there was no crime that could have deserved such a punishment, and the worst madness was that of the tyrant who had inflicted it.

"Your paper shall reach the King without fail," I said, putting the missive in my pocket, "and I think I can promise you that it will be soon."

"I shall know if it does," he replied. "Even if the King sends me no word, I shall know by the peace I shall feel before I die, if he pardons my sin."

"You do not want to know my name, or who I am?" I asked, somewhat astonished at the confidence he reposed in me.

"No. I cannot ask for it, because I do not wish to give you mine. But I feel I can trust you. I know it by your voice, and I am convinced that the opportunity for which I have been waiting all these years has come at last. I thank you for your service, and I beg that it may be done soon, or it may yet be too late. Do not stay here now. Go—go quickly before anyone comes and finds you."

The man was in a consuming fever, and he had not long to live. I could see that plainly, and the perception reconciled me somewhat to what seemed the callousness of leaving him to his cruel fate. He wanted nothing of me but the one service he had asked, and he would not let me linger.

"I desire neither pity nor relief," he said; "I deserved all I have suffered, and it is my humble hope that it may be taken as an atonement for my crime paid in this world instead of the next. Go—go—I beseech you, and let no one know of your visit—especially not the Duchess Sophia."

I left him, and putting back the wrenched staple, made the door fast as it was before. There was no one near the place, and I felt sure when I rejoined the rest of the hunting party that my absence had excited no suspicion.

As we rode back to the castle the Prince informed me that his betrothal was an accomplished fact. Having secured the

consent of her mother, he had that afternoon taken advantage of being alone with the little Duchess to make his proposal, and he had obtained a favorable answer. He accepted my congratulations with his accustomed dignity and reserve, but I thought that the precipitation with which he had acted was at least a sign that the match was not distasteful to him, and I rejoiced that the King's wishes had been so happily fulfilled.

The public announcement of the betrothal took place at the hunt dinner that evening, and the healths of the Prince and the Duchess were drunk with wild cries of "Hoch, hoch!" and enthusiastic clinking of glasses. The alliance was so cordially hailed by the whole little court that Count Latouschka and his son were obliged to hide their discomfiture and offer their congratulations with the rest. They did it skillfully, but the Dowager-Duchess seemed hardly to know whether she was pleased or not, and I could not help thinking that she was inclined to regret the lost chances of her nephew.

I wrote a dispatch to King Ludwig that evening, and sent it off by special courier—not forgetting to inclose with it the paper intrusted to me by the poor mad monk. Within twenty-four hours I calculated that I should receive a reply, and in this computation I was not mistaken. I was standing at the end of a long terrace on the castle wall commanding a view of the valley below, when the King's messenger arrived with packets for the Prince and myself, and I opened the one placed in my hands with a mind full of pleasant expectations; but what was my astonishment and consternation to find, instead of praise and promises of rewards, an abrupt and peremptory command to proceed no further with negotiations, and to return to the capital without a moment's delay.

No reason for this extraordinary change of tactics was vouchsafed me, and I was completely at a loss for a clue to it. I hoped that the Prince might be better informed, and I was about to go in search of him when I saw him advancing from the other end of the terrace to meet me.

"What is the meaning of this, Baron?" he asked, glancing significantly at the paper still in my hand.

"I do not know, your Highness," I replied helplessly, "I was hoping that you might be able to throw some light on the matter. I have only received an order to break off negotiations and to return immediately to Altenwaldau."

"That is precisely what my father has written to me," said the Prince.

"If only we knew the reason for such a sudden change of policy!" I cried. "It is monstrous—yet there must be a reason. Has your Highness no sort of clue?"

"No. No more than this—that if my father found he could gain possession of the lands of Hohenstaufen at a lower price than he had calculated, then he would not give the higher one."

"Ah!" I gasped, "but how? How could he gain possession in any other way?"

"It is possible that he may have discovered some flaw in the title of the Duchess to the inheritance—do you remember the circumstances of the marriage of her mother? They were rather romantic, you know."

I started, recalling the story I had heard from the King. It seemed strange to me that it should be to the Prince that such a solution as this should have occurred, and not to an old and practised diplomatist like myself, yet the moment he suggested it I saw its force. And if this were the explanation, then it would be in another direction that King Ludwig would have his son and heir go a-wooing, for in this case all the rights and domains of Hohenstaufen would lapse naturally to himself without the need of any matrimonial alliance.

I turned in perplexity to the Prince, and saw that he was as undecided how to act as myself.

"It is hard," he said half whimsically. "I consented to engage in this courtship for the good of the State. Now it seems as if I must sacrifice myself for nothing, and gain no reward but my father's anger!"

I knew what he meant, and it was what I should have expected of him, but now my influence was needed to turn the scale, and I interposed hastily.

"Tell me, your Highness—your heart is not engaged in this business?"

"No," he said with a melancholy smile. "How should it be? The Duchess Carola is an engaging young person, no doubt, but she is only a child, and it is not likely that I should be really in love with her."

"I had thought"——I said, and then I broke off. "Well! no matter what I thought—it is just as well that I was wrong. Now it is quite clear to me what is our course. We originally

only intended to stay for a week, and we have already been here four days. We must tell the Duchess that in consequence of tidings just received from home, we shall be obliged to cut short our visit, and leave at an early hour to-morrow. The King is ill—seriously ill!"

"I do not like it," said the Prince, unwillingly. "I have spoken to the little Duchess—not of love exactly, but of marriage and service and devotion. I do not see how I can draw back now without a stain upon my honor. Whatever may have transpired, she cannot be to blame."

"You do not commit yourself to anything. You do not draw back. It will be time enough to decide about that when you know the King's reasons, but before you go any further you must learn what the circumstances are, and therefore we must get away as soon as possible."

I had some difficulty, but I did at last persuade him, and we decided that illness of the King would be the best excuse to give for our abrupt departure. I went into the castle to request an immediate audience of the Dowager-Duchess, and on being shown into her presence, told the story that Prince Waldemar and I had agreed upon. I told it with all the tact and courtesy of which I was master, and had hoped that it would be convincing, but the expression of the Duchess as she listened was disquieting. She was sitting with the old Count Latouschka, and when I had finished speaking, she turned to him with a disagreeable laugh.

"Oh, the King is ill, and the Prince must leave the first thing to-morrow. Naturally. A good and sufficient reason, is it not, Nikolas?"

"Most certainly," said the keen-faced, lank-haired Count. "The Prince is evidently a dutiful son."

There was a perceptible sneer in his tone, and I looked from him to the Duchess in discomfiture. She was plainly in a furious passion, and she could scarcely control herself. Her hands trembled, and her face was flushed with angry color. The veins of her forehead were swelled almost to bursting, and her prominent green eyes glared at me from under their puffy eyelids as if she would have liked to do me a mischief. What could have happened to put her into such a rage? Count Latouschka had evidently been counseling her to prudence, and he exerted all his influence to restrain her from a burst of violent language. He came forward with a smooth speech

of polite regret over our enforced departure, and I left the room without discovering the cause of offense.

Ten minutes later, when I was on my way to rejoin the Prince, I was arrested in the midst of the long corridor leading to our rooms by a hand laid upon my arm, and turning, saw the troubled face of the castle chaplain.

"Baron Brock," he said in a shaky whisper, "I have followed you in order to give you a word of warning. There is mischief afoot in the castle, and the sooner the Prince leaves it the better. Leave to-night if you can!"

"Impossible!" I said in shocked astonishment. "We have arranged to start at seven to-morrow, and it would be impossible to go sooner. What is there to be afraid of?"

"Ah! that I cannot tell you. But you have incurred the displeasure of our gracious lady, and she is dangerous when she is displeased."

"What have we done?" I asked breathlessly. "I knew there was something—but what is it?"

"Have you not seen the mad monk and heard his story? You sent dispatches to Altenwaldau last night, and as soon as a reply reaches you, you declare you must leave at once—is it not on account of that scandal?"

"What scandal? I know nothing. For heaven's sake tell me all! It is true that we have been recalled, but we have not the least idea why. What has happened to make the Duchess angry?"

The old man glanced cautiously and fearfully around. The passage was immensely long, and dimly lighted by a few little oil lamps only. In the deeply recessed doorways it would be easy for anyone to hide and listen.

"Why did you go to the pavilion in the woods?" he asked in a low voice of distress and reproach; "you might have known that your movements would be watched, and that mischief would come of it."

"What mischief could come of it?" I asked. "I certainly did converse with the poor maniac, but there was no harm in that. Why should the Duchess object, even if she heard of it?"

The chaplain threw up his hands with a gesture which reminded me of someone I had seen recently. Who was it?—I could not recollect.

"Is it possible that your Excellency has talked to that poor

blind madman and have not learnt his history? Do you not know that it was he, a traveling friar then, who performed the marriage ceremony for Duke Rudolf and his Duchess, and that now the poor madman declares he was no priest when he did it? If this were true, then the marriage would have been invalid, and the Duchess Carola would be no duchess at all. It is not true, of course; but immediately on your return to the castle you send letters to King Ludwig by special messenger, and the answer to them comes in the form of a palpable excuse to recall you immediately. You must admit that appearances are against you."

"Gott im Himmel!" I exclaimed.

"It all comes from that fatal remark of Count Stefan about the mad monk, and I—ah! fool that I was to have told you of the pavilion and its secret—but it is ever in my thoughts, and I could not refrain from speaking of it. I am getting old and foolish—ah! old and foolish."

He threw up his hands again, and then I knew who it was of whom he reminded me. It was the mad monk who had made precisely that gesture, and now I saw other resemblances as well.

"Ah!" I cried, "you are connected by blood with that wretched prisoner. You must be his brother, and naturally his fate is continually in your thoughts. Tell me, is it true that he has sinned and suffered as he says?"

"I do not know—nobody knows. Do not ask me. Ask me no more, but go, and be on your guard every moment of the time until you find yourselves safe over the frontier. Do not leave the Prince alone for an instant, and see that his door is guarded by his own attendants to-night."

The old chaplain hurried off, and I went to the Prince to acquaint him with this most untoward development of affairs. He took it more calmly than I had expected, and did not seem surprised.

"Well," he said, "it is a strange tale. No doubt the monk's missive conveyed to my father the information that the Duchess has been so anxious to keep back from him; but whether it is true or not, is another matter. In any case my word has been pledged, and the Duchess would have just cause for resentment if she thought I intended to draw back now. I do not wonder that she is angry."

"She is very angry indeed," I said, "but after all, I do not

see what she can do, and you have your retinue to protect you."

"Have I?" said the Prince drily, "I am not so sure of that! I have not seen one of them since those letters came, and when I rang for attendance just now there was no answer. I wish you would see what has happened."

I gazed at him in stupefaction for a moment, and then I rushed out of the room into my own, which was next, and through the whole suite assigned to the Prince's body-guard. There was not a soul to be seen anywhere. The rooms were all empty and deserted, and even the baggage was gone. What had happened? I rang furiously, and obtaining no answer, went out to seek someone who could give me information. At the head of the great stone stairs leading down into the central hall of the castle, I met the old Count Latouschka, who smiled upon me out of his slit-like eyes with a very malicious expression.

"Oh!" he said in reply to my inquiries, "did you not know? The Prince is so eager to get back to his father's sick bed, and my sister is, of course, anxious to forward his wishes. The attendants have started to-night, and will have *déjeuner* ready at Schloss Festenheim for you and the Prince on your way down to-morrow."

"But how could they go without orders from me or the Prince?" I asked hotly.

Latouschka smiled yet more evilly than before. "I think," he said, "I think you will find that they have gone!"

"I must go and see," I said; "I shall send after them, and have them recalled."

"Pardon me, but I do not think you will find that possible," said the Count. "The castle is closed for the night, and there is no further egress this evening."

It was seven o'clock then—not yet dinner-time, and the gates of the castle were closed. I found that it was but too true, and the Prince and I were prisoners. To bandy words with Count Latouschka was worse than useless, and meanwhile the Prince was alone and unguarded. I hurried back to him, resolving not to leave his side for a moment again, and after talking over the matter together, we agreed that since we were for the moment practically helpless, an appearance of unconcern would be our wisest policy.

We took our accustomed places at dinner as if nothing un-

usual had happened, but I remarked that the elder Duchess was not present, and that her place was taken by the young Duchess Carola. She explained that her mother was prostrate with headache, and she tried to play her part and keep up the conversation, but her manner was troubled and constrained, and she looked as if she had been weeping. I saw her regarding the Prince every now and then with shy, surreptitious glances of anxious scrutiny. To all appearance he was still what he had been for twenty-four hours past, her betrothed husband, and the arbiter of her future; but a heavy cloud had come up out of a clear sky, and it hung threateningly over them both.

"My mother asked me to say that she hoped to have the pleasure of seeing your Highness this evening when you have finished dinner," said the young girl, as she rose from the table. "If you will be so kind as to come to the red salon, you will find her there."

The Prince bowed, and expressed his satisfaction that the Duchess was so much better as to be able to receive us.

"Yes," said Carola, with a pleading glance, "she is better, but she will probably be very nervous and—agitated. I would suggest that your Highness should be careful not to—excite her?"

"I will be careful," said the Prince, with his most impassive expression.

He held the door open, and stood waiting for her to pass out, but she still lingered, and as she looked up at the handsome dark face, a hot flush came into her pale cheeks.

"You hold my destiny in your hands," she said in so low a voice that her words were hardly audible. "I know not what may come of it, but for your own sake, as well as for mine, I entreat you to say nothing that could irritate my mother."

She did not wait for an answer, and glancing at the Prince's face, I wondered if he still thought her of no more account than a child.

The red salon was a small reception-room approached through the armory, which the Duchess used when she wished to withdraw from the court, and Count Latouschka and his son and the Duchess Carola were the only persons with her when the Prince entered her presence. I followed closely behind him, hoping that he would attend to the warning he had received, but I soon saw that no prudence on his part could possibly avert the storm ready to burst upon us.

The Duchess sat like an angry Juno in a sort of chair of state, and before Prince Waldemar had said half a dozen words, she sprang up in an ungovernable passion. She interrupted him in the midst of his polite expressions of regret over his enforced departure.

"No, no, Prince! Do not flatter yourself that you will escape so easily upon false pretenses. I have had information of the secret action of your spy, Baron Brock, and I know perfectly what is the true reason why you want to hurry away, but you shall not go so easily!"

She would not listen to the Prince when he tried to speak, and she went on yet more furiously: "Oh, I know, I know all the plots and machinations that have been going on, but if you imagine that I shall endure insult and calumny tamely and without retaliation, you are mistaken! I would have given you my daughter and all her inheritance, but now that you have raked up this wicked scandal, you shall have neither, but only insult in return for insult."

"What scandal have I raked up, Duchess?" asked the Prince firmly; "I know of none, and I believe in none."

He spoke like the noble and high-minded gentleman that he was, and his sincerity was so convincing that the angry Duchess was for a moment staggered. But Latouschka whispered something into her ear, and she burst into a scornful laugh.

"Ah, yes! That is your cue until you have got safe away; then you think it will be time to announce your changed intentions. But I have learned the secret a little too soon, you see!"

"There is no secret to learn so far as I am concerned, your Highness," said the Prince, "and my intentions are entirely unchanged. I consider myself the betrothed husband of the Duchess, your daughter, and if a proof of my loyalty to her is required, I am ready to give it. I must leave this house tomorrow, but if you desire it, and she is willing, I will marry her first, and take her back to Altenwaldau with me as my bride."

I gave a gasp of consternation and dismay. Here was the Prince plunging into the very impossibility his father had schemed for—only now it was against the King's wish. He glanced round for the little Duchess, and moving quickly to her side, held out his hand for hers; but the younger Count thrust himself in between them, and dragged her roughly away.

"Do not believe him, Carola!" he said in a thick, choking

voice. "He would only do this in order to get himself out of a difficulty, and he would soon desert or divorce you when he found he could do it with impunity. Do not trust him!"

"But I do trust him," said Carola, drawing herself haughtily away from her cousin. "Prince Waldemar, I will not marry you to-morrow, as if I were afraid you might fail me, but I will wait until you come back to claim me, and I am sure that you will come!"

"He will not come," said the elder Duchess passionately, "and he shall not come! I do not want him to come. We will show him that we can do well enough without the Altenwaldau, and they shall be made to repent their belief in scandalous inventions. This match is broken off, Prince, and understand that it is broken off by us. I shall find a husband for my daughter who will be capable of defending her rights, and you —ah, you need not be inconsolable! You shall have a wife since you want one. I will give you a little kitchen-maid out of the castle scullery, and you shall be married to her before you leave to-morrow!"

"Mother!" cried Carola, in a voice of horror and indignation.

"Be silent, Carola, and leave the room instantly!" said the Duchess. "This business is no concern of yours any longer, and I will not have you interfere in it. Leave the room!"

Carola burst into tears, but she did not move. The Prince stood silent, unmoved by the sight of her distress, and equally unmoved, apparently, by the insult to himself. Count Stefan stood like a protector by the side of the weeping girl, with triumph on his cunning foxy features. The elder Count looked malicious, though uneasy, and the Duchess was evidently beyond control.

"It is time for us all to leave the room, I think," I said, with what dignity I could. "Duchess, the hour is late, and you will excuse us, I hope."

"Oh, yes! I will excuse you—until to-morrow. But remember, before you start to-morrow, you will be in attendance at the chapel to see your Prince married, or else—"

She paused, but the Prince disdained to inquire what was the alternative she gave, and she turned from me to him.

"If the Baron does not see that, he shall see nothing else ever again in this world!" she said, in a voice vibrating with passion and determination. "I cannot touch you, but he, who is

responsible for the whole mischief, he shall suffer if you do not. You shall not go scot-free back to King Ludwig; and if you refuse the bride I choose to provide for you your spy shall bear the punishment. There is an instrument outside in the armory that is capable of paying off the heaviest of scores, and unless you consent to save him he shall make acquaintance with it. I give you your choice—a bride for you, or the punishment of the casque for him—there is no alternative."

The woman was mad—utterly, hopelessly mad. I said so as soon as the Prince and I were alone together; but unfortunately there was no one with the power to restrain her madness, and the Latouschkas, if they could have done it, had not the will. They hated us both, and would be glad to see the Prince insulted or me destroyed. From them I knew there was no help to be had. I tried to make the best of it to the Prince that night, but when I thought of the Duchess's hideous threat, and remembered the tragedy of the ruined pavilion in the woods, I confess that my heart sank low within me.

It was a desperate situation, and now, if ever, was my opportunity to play the part of a hero. The gates of the fortress were closed and guarded, the courtyard, thirty feet below the level of our windows, was shut in by the castle walls, and the doors of the corridor were watched by an armed sentinel. Obviously, since there was no possible means of escape, it was incumbent upon me to profess willingness to be sacrificed, and obviously it was equally the part of the Prince to refuse to allow such a thing. I made some faint remark to the effect that he must not consider me, and that rather than have him exposed to insult and contumely I was prepared to face any penalty, but he said nothing; and then I began to reflect that he could easily annul his marriage, and shake off his kitchen-maid, while I could never get back the sight of my eyes and the use of my reason when once they had been destroyed.

"It is not possible—it is a mere melodramatic threat—she would never dare to do it!" the Prince kept exclaiming all through that most miserable night, but it was plain that he did believe in the reality of the danger, and that he was torn between the conflicting emotions of outraged pride and alarm for my safety. If it had been his own destruction that had been threatened, or even if he had been given the prospect of suffering with me, I do not believe he would have given way; but the idea of letting me suffer, and himself going free, was intoler-

able. All night he paced up and down in the two rooms to which we were confined. He was manifestly in great perplexity and distress, but he said little, and not until the morning came did I know what course he had made up his mind to take. With the first gray light of the dawn there came a messenger from the Duchess demanding his decision, and he gave it without hesitation.

"I have no choice. I must endure any indignity rather than desert my comrade, but tell the Duchess she will be mad if she subjects me to this insult. It is an insult not only to myself and my father personally, but to the whole of Altenwaldau, and the indemnity that will be exacted for it will be heavy."

The old Duchess *was* mad. There was not a doubt in my mind about it, but up to the very last moment I believed that her advisers would intervene to restrain and pacify her. They did not do it—perhaps they could not—and at the appointed hour we were hurried to the castle chapel. The whole household was assembled when we entered, and by the altar, robed and veiled entirely in black, stood the bride, waiting for her unwilling bridegroom.

The old Duchess was leaning over the cushions of the ducal pew up in the gallery, and I met her mocking triumphant smile as I looked up; but the little Duchess Carola, who stood behind her, was in tears, and was obliged to raise her handkerchief continually to her eyes.

"She is ill," the major-domo whispered to me. "She has wept the whole night through, and it is against the orders of the physician that she is here now. If she were able to exert her authority, as in a week's time she will be, this would never have been allowed to happen."

I knew that very well, but it was small consolation; I glanced with disgust at the unbridal-looking figure at the altar. She was a short, thick-set young woman, with enormous feet and ankles, and a mop of tousled black hair—that much I could discern at a glance; and the black veil, intended as a travesty, was in reality a mercy, I had no doubt. Evidently they had done the very worst they could, and when I saw the Prince take his place at the side of this preposterous creature my wrath rose irrepressibly.

"Prince!" I cried laying my hand on his arm, "you shall not do this! Rather any penalty for me than such an outrage upon your royal dignity. Let them do their worst—I need

not endure for long, for I can always shoot myself when it is done."

The Prince would not accept my desperate offer. He cast one look upon me, and then signed to the frightened chaplain to proceed with the office. Now that he had made up his mind the Prince bore himself with as much dignity and self-possession as if the marriage were all that it ought to have been, and there was no one present who appeared half so indifferent.

Only once did he pause or hesitate. It was when he had to surrender his hand to be bound, according to the custom of the country, with that of the bride by the priest's stole. The bride put out her hand—such a hand! A discolored, reddened, and dirty hand that had evidently come fresh from the filling of coal-scuttles and the scrubbing of floors; and this hand, with the wedding-ring upon it, the Prince had to take and hold under the folds of the purple ribbon while the priest uttered his benediction, and pronounced the pair husband and wife, indissolubly united.

When this was done the pastor of the parish came forward with a registry-book, in which the Prince was required to sign his name. The newly made Princess, it appeared, could not write, and affixed her mark in attestation of the name put down for her by a witness. I bent forward to see what it might be, and "Hedwig Schwartz" was what I saw. She looked like her name; but in justice to the poor thing, I must say that she seemed to relish the situation as little as the Prince himself. Her grimy little hand was shaking so when she took up the pen that she could hardly even make the required cross, and I tried to console myself by reflecting that it would not be difficult to get rid of her when we were once out of the snare.

"She must come with us, your Highness!" I whispered to the Prince when the ceremony was over. "It would never do to leave her behind."

We were in the midst of leave-takings, and the old Duchess herself, haughty and triumphant, was making her way down the stairs. The Prince, bent upon instant departure, had refused refreshment, and was standing near the great doorway, waiting for his carriage. The wretched little bride had fallen into the background, and it was when I saw her trying to shuffle away that I uttered my whispered protest. Before the Prince had time to reply by more than a glance, the Duchess had come up, and was addressing him with a malignant smile.

"Where is your bride, Prince Waldemar? I am afraid you are not a very gallant bridegroom! Do you intend to take her with you for the honeymoon, or would you prefer to leave her as a hostage with us?"

The bride—that little black blot upon the scene—on seeing the approach of the Duchess, had scuffled forward again, and when the Prince turned to look for her, she was quite near.

"The lady can choose for herself," he said with cold politeness. "Which do you wish to do, madam? Will you come with us, or would you prefer to remain here?"

"Answer, girl!" said the Duchess roughly, "You know what you have got to say."

Still the girl was silent. Her features were indistinguishable under her heavy veil, but her hands were working nervously.

"You would rather remain here, doubtless?" said the Prince, and I saw that this was the decision which he himself desired.

"No—Highness—I would rather go with you. Please take me away from here," she muttered, in the patois of the country.

She was more afraid of the old Duchess than of anything apparently, and I gave a sigh of relief. The Prince shrugged his shoulders ever so slightly, and bowed to the Duchess.

"Pray make my adieux to the Duchess Carola," he said, "and express to her the regret I feel on account of the unhappy circumstances which have parted us."

The situation was a severe test of personal courage and dignity, but I felt proud of the Prince when I saw how gallantly he rose above its difficulties. He handed his miserable little bride into the barouche as if she had been a princess of the blood, and the spiteful Duchess was robbed of half her triumph.

Not until we had passed through the straggling street of the village, and the turrets of the castle had disappeared round a bend of the road did the lines of his face relax.

"Thank Heaven that we are clear of that accursed place and its hateful inhabitants at last!" he said, throwing himself back in the carriage.

The black-robed bride by his side huddled into her corner as far away from him as she could, and from my seat opposite I saw that she was beginning to cry.

I thought it better to take no notice, and the Prince did not

seem to be aware of her distress. He gazed gloomily down the gorge, thinking no doubt of the change in his position and feelings since he had come up a few short days before.

He never cast a glance upon the shrinking creature beside him, and her tears fell in silence for a time, but presently, at the sound of a sob, the Prince turned his head.

He regarded her silently for some seconds, and then glanced at me with an interrogative lift of the eyebrows, as if to ask "What is to be done?" but I did not think it was my business to interfere, and I only responded with a grimace.

"You are unhappy," the Prince said at last, "and no doubt you have been forced against your will into this business, but you need not be afraid. I will see that no punishment falls on you."

His voice was gentle, even kind, and at the sound of it the girl checked her sobs.

"What will you do with me?" she asked in her guttural, peasant patois.

"I will have you taken care of in comfortable lodgings until you can be sent home," he began, but she interrupted him with a hysterical cry.

"Oh no, no, no! I can never go home any more, now!"

"Would you prefer to settle at Altenwaldau?" he asked in some surprise. "Well then, I will give you a snug little dowry, and find some brave fellow among my troopers who will make you a good husband."

The girl began to weep more bitterly than ever. I thought she was an ungrateful hussy, and said so, but she paid no heed to me, and huddled herself up under her veil.

"What would you like us to do?" inquired the Prince at last. "You don't want to return home, and you don't want to settle at Altenwaldau. You don't wish for a husband evidently—what do you want then?"

"I want to be with you, Prince," answered the girl almost inaudibly through her sobs.

"What!" said the Prince sharply, and then drawing himself up, and bestowing an astonished glance upon her, he said almost sternly, "With me—oh, no! That is nonsense—the most impossible nonsense. You do not suppose that the ceremony through which I have just been forced against my will is anything but a farce?"

The girl did not answer, but she sobbed on, and incensed by

the revelation of such folly and vanity as I had never dreamed of, I felt it time for me to interfere with a salutary admonition.

"Do not delude yourself, young woman," I said; "the Prince has made you a generous offer, far more generous than you deserve, and if you are wise you will accept it—in fact, you must accept it. After what has occurred, it will be a necessity for you to be provided with a husband, and as soon as matters can be arranged, some suitable person will be found for you. Be thankful, and make no more fuss about it. That will be your best course."

But my admonitions were wasted on that girl. A more unreasonable creature it would have been impossible to find anywhere. Nothing that we could say would satisfy her, and she wept quietly under her veil all the way until we reached Festenheim.

The little shooting-box in the hanging woods above the road was the place where we expected to find the Prince's suite. Two officers came out to greet us, and when we heard that they were the only ones there, and that the others had been sent over the frontier the night before, I felt that we were by no means out of the wood yet. It was absolutely necessary to change horses, however, and while that was being done, we felt we might as well go into the house and take some much needed refreshment.

The two officers knew nothing of what had happened at the castle, and had come here, and sent on their men, as they imagined, under orders from the Prince. They looked with surprise at the ungainly figure alighting from the carriage, but the Prince made no attempt at explanation, and merely signed to me to lead her into the house.

"There is a housekeeper in this place—take me to her," said she excitedly, "I must have a room to myself, and the woman must come to me immediately."

I thought that the demand, considering the station of the girl was far too imperiously made, but I handed her over to the housekeeper without demur, and followed the Prince into the sitting-room, where we had lunched before. It was a bare and comfortless room, which looked as if it were seldom used, and the hastily prepared meal spread out on the rickety table in the center had not an inviting appearance. The Prince had thrown himself into a huge chair at one end of the table, and he looked wearied and dispirited.

"Where is the girl?" he asked, when he saw me come in without her.

"In the charge of the housekeeper, your Highness," I answered.

"Is she crying still?"

"I think not, but it matters little. Let her cry. It seems to me an ominous thing that Adelstein and Rothenburg alone should be here, and I shall be glad when we are safely over the frontier. I think we ought to be off as soon as possible."

"Have you ordered the fresh horses to be put in?"

"Yes, Adelstein has gone to see about it."

"And Rothenburg?"

"Is on guard outside the door, your Highness."

"Good. Will you tell him to permit no one to pass?"

I went outside to give the order, and then returned to the Prince to urge food and wine upon him, but hardly had we taken our places at the table, when an altercation was heard outside the door, and the voice of Rothenburg, in its most inexorable tones, fell upon our ears.

"My orders are to permit no one to pass, madam."

What followed was not audible, but the officer's reply was distinct and final.

"I am sorry, madam, but it is impossible! However important your business with the Prince may be, you cannot see him now. My orders are imperative."

"It is my wife—save the mark!" said the Prince, with a whimsical smile. "Well, let her come in if she likes. I suppose she thinks she has a right, and she may want food."

I went to the door and admitted the girl; but whatever her reason for seeking admission, it was not that she might share our meal. Refusing the Prince's invitation to sit down to the table, she walked to one of the deeply recessed little windows, and took up her stand there, looking out into the desolate, weed-grown garden. She stood with her back turned to us, and after an exchange of significant glances, the Prince and I finished our informal meal in silence. When he rose from the table, however, she turned her head, and spoke to him over her shoulder.

"What is to happen to me—tell me!" she said tragically.

I was annoyed and disgusted. It seemed to me the most monstrous impertinence on her part to be making such a fuss about herself and her fate, and I thought she merited a severe

snub; but the Prince answered her with admirable patience and courtesy.

"I am not able to foretell what lies in the future, madam," he said, "but you may depend upon us to do all that we can for you, and to make as comfortable a provision for you as possible. I have already assured you of that."

"Yes, yes, I know!" she said impatiently, "A trooper husband and all the rest—but suppose I don't want such a provision, and absolutely refuse it? Good Heavens! Don't you wish to see my face? You have never even looked at me!"

The Prince started, and I nearly jumped. It was not merely the coquetry of the speech—it was a sudden change in her voice and attitude which compelled our attention, and we looked at her more closely. She still wore the concealing veil, but it struck me that her outline was altered. She held herself differently, and her speech had changed all at once from the harsh and almost unintelligible patois of the country into the clear and cultivated accents of an educated person.

"Let me see!" said the Prince abruptly, and crossing the room in two steps, he laid his hand upon her veil. She gave a little scream, and made a feint of resistance; but it was only a feint, and the Prince persisted in his determination. He flung back the thick, disguising web, and uttered a hasty exclamation of confusion and amazement.

It was the Duchess Carola who stood before us. Flushed, agitated, half-frightened and half-smiling, her fair face looked out from the black folds, and I had never seen her look sweeter or more charming. She had thrown off her disguising wig, washed the stain and dirt from her hands, and got rid of the superfluous wrappings that had altered the contour of her figure. Her little feet were still in the enormous elastic-sided boots into which she had slipped them, and that was the only remaining trace of her disguise, but it seemed rather to accentuate the grace and charm of her appearance, as an incongruity sometimes will.

The Prince gazed at her without a word. He seemed staggered by the unexpected discovery, and mistaking the meaning of his silence, the little Duchess turned pale. The smile died away upon her lips, and her blue eyes filled with tears.

"O Prince Waldemar!" she said appealingly, "forgive me for the trick I have played you, but I could not bear that you should be humiliated, and I could not persuade my mother, so

I thought of this plan. You said—you know you said that you were willing to marry me at once, so I was only taking you at your word. But if you don't want me after all—"

"It is you, Carola—you! *You* are my wife!" cried the Prince.

The ecstacy in his voice was enough to reassure any woman, and Carola smiled again. She recovered confidence enough to glance roguishly at me.

"You were very unkind to me on the journey down, Baron Brock!" she said, with mischievous reproach.

"Pardon, Princess!" I stammered, not forgetting even in my confusion to give her her new title, "but—but I thought I saw you up in the gallery, looking on as a spectator while the wedding took place?"

"It was my friend, Emilia von Berenstein!" said the Princess gleefully. "She is not unlike me in figure, and I was sure that if she put on a dress of mine, and held her handkerchief up to her face, most people would be deceived. But to my mother I had sent a message that I was too ill to appear. She was not surprised, I fancy, and luckily she suspected nothing. She will never forgive me for what I have done, I am afraid, but I trust that your Highness at least is not displeased?"

She had turned again to the Prince, and the wistful inflection of her soft tones was so irresistible that I did not wonder at its effect even on the reserved and self-contained Prince Waldemar. He dropped upon his knee, and pressed his lips to the hand which bore his ring.

"O Carola—my wife—my love! I can never thank you enough," he said with deep emotion. "I love you for what you have done, and the devotion of all my life will be yours. But, oh! your hand! your poor little hand! How you have maltreated it!"

"It is the worse of the two," said Carola, smiling sweetly. "You see it is the one I had to give you to hold, and it had to have a few scratches to redden it. I was so very much afraid of being found out. I wonder if they have discovered my absence yet!"

The Prince sprang instantly to his feet, and turned to me. I was in the act of beating a retreat, feeling that my presence might become somewhat *de trop*, and I had already gained the door.

"Brock!" he said, "will you see if the carriage is there? We have not a moment to lose, for as long as we are on this side of the frontier we are not safe from pursuit. Already the Duchess may be upon our track!"

"You do not want to hand me back to my mother, then?" said the little Duchess. "And you promise me that if I go on with you, you won't divorce me, and make me over to one of your brave troopers?"

I retired discreetly—but not before I had seen a hasty movement of the Prince's arm which was even more lover-like than protective. It seemed to me that Prince Waldemar had now a chance of happiness which might fully make up to him for his past misfortunes—but the King, the King! What would he say to the business?

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It turned out better than one could have hoped.

A little cloud of dust, which gained upon us as we tore down the pass, betrayed that the abduction of the young Duchess had been discovered, and that a troop of horsemen were in hot pursuit, but our horses were fresh, and we did not spare them. As good luck would have it, a train was just on the point of starting when we gained the station, and our panting and exhausted pursuers rode up and drew rein in time only to see us steaming away into friendly territory. The little Duchess looked out of the railway carriage window, and gaily waved her handkerchief to the discomfited party; to our horror, one of them, who must have lost his head in the excitement of the chase, raised his rifle and fired. It was rather at the receding train than at the lady that he aimed, for she was not hurt, but the Prince dragged her away from the open window with terrified haste, and, for once in my life, I heard him rap out a tremendous oath.

He was more excited and inspired than I had ever seen him, and the spirit that was in him enabled him to face the old King with an unflinching front. There was a pitched battle between them on the question of the course to be pursued with regard to the Princess Carola, but the Prince stuck to his guns and to his wife, and by an immediate remarriage with all due pomp and ceremony in the cathedral of Altenwaldau he made her position completely impregnable.

In the event he was more than justified—even in the eyes of the worldly wise old King. The doubt raised as to the Prin-

cess's status was found to be no legal flaw at all. It was true that the friar, tempted by the promise of a lordly fee, had performed the marriage ceremony for the Duke and Duchess, when, being merely a deacon and not a full-fledged priest, he was not qualified to do it, and the knowledge of this, and other sins against his cloth, had preyed upon his mind until he became possessed by the idea that only in public confession could he gain absolution and salvation; but the motive of the proud and vindictive Duchess Sophia in suppressing his evidence and exacting vengeance upon him was to prevent the raising of a scandal rather than to protect the interests of her daughter. The old Duke, a cautious man, had not been satisfied by the uncertain credentials of the stray friar who had first united them, and before the birth of the expected son and heir—who turned out a daughter—he had taken the precaution of going through the ceremony a second time, keeping the step as private as the first, but securing proofs which should be incontestable.

The researches again set on foot by King Ludwig brought out all the facts, but the poor mad monk did not live to learn the truth. Through his brother, the chaplain of the castle, I eventually heard that he died two days after I saw him, and I was thankful to know that he had escaped from his miseries, and from the danger of further persecution.

The desire of King Ludwig's heart, jeopardized by his own trickery, had been fulfilled in spite of himself, and the Duchy of Hohenstaufen was once more united with its parent kingdom. He showed his satisfaction by a complete change of front, and became graciousness itself to his well-dowered daughter-in-law, but Carola knew that to the Prince himself the inheritance made no difference. She knew that he valued her above her lands, and it may have been because of this knowledge, cherished silently in her heart, that he has proved so much more fortunate in his wife and his domestic relations than any preceding prince of his house.

# Anecdotes.

IN this department a first prize of $5.00 in gold, and second and third prizes of an annual subscription to Short Stories each, will be given for the best, the second and the third best original or selected anecdotes sent in before the 1st day of the month following the date of this issue. No other compensation is made for matter used in this department. **The sources from which all selected or reprinted anecdotes have been taken must be clearly stated. The Editor cannot return contributions or correspond about them. If the story is valuable keep a copy of it.** Address "Anecdotes," care The Current Literature Publishing Co., 34 West 26th Street, New York.

## Worse Than Before.

A lawyer who had recently come into town placed his shingle outside the door. It read, "A. Swindler." A gentleman who was passing by saw the sign and, entering the lawyer's office, said:

"Man alive, look at that sign. Put in your name in full—Alexander, or whatever it is. Don't you see how it reads now?"

"Oh, yes, I know," replied the lawyer, "but I don't exactly like to do it."

"Why not," said the stranger; "it looks mighty bad as it is. What is your name?"

"Adam Swindler."—Selected from The Green Bag by Ralph M. Broadhurst.

## Japanese Diplomacy.

It was at the time of the exhibition in 1867. A Japanese embassy went to Paris to treat for three free ports in France, in return for which France was to have three in Japan. The negotiations were short and amicable.

"Make your choice," said Japan; "we will choose afterward."

The French Minister of Foreign Affairs selected Yokohama, Yedo, and Hanyang.

The embassy made no objection; they merely smiled and went on their way.

Japan sent word, some time afterward, that the three ports named were agreed to, and that it desired, in return, Havre, Marseilles, and Southampton.

The selection of Southampton greatly amused the French officials; they laughed and they laughed. Southampton a French port! Politely they explained the situation.

"Southampton is in England," they said.

"We know that," came the response; "but then Hanyang is in Korea."—Selected by D. B. W. from London Spare Moments.

## Far Off.

Two soldiers conversing on the veranda of one of the many buildings that constitute the Soldiers' National Home, Milwaukee, Wis., attracted my attention.

Their animated gestures, enthusiastic faces, and dissimilarity of ages combined to excite my curiosity to such an extent that I forgot the laws of etiquette and uninvitingly listened to the following anecdote:

"In the early seventies," said the elder soldier, "I saw an illustrated anecdote in a San Francisco paper which represented a military post with long rows of snow-white tents, making a superb background for the commanding figures that stood in front. The three officers, for such they were, held high rank in the American army. Two of them every one knew, who was conversant at all with the topics of the times, as the now lamented dashing, daring Custer; and our present able and gallant General Miles. The rivalry existing between these two already famous soldiers in their ambi-

tion to wear the star of a general was an open secret. The third officer, with outstretched arm, was pointing toward the star-bespangled heavens and exclaiming with a smile:

"'Custer, there's Miles between you and that star.'"—EDWARD J. PICKETT.

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In accordance with our offer the first prize of $5 in gold, and second and third prizes of subscriptions to SHORT STORIES for one year, have been awarded respectively to Ralph M. Broadhurst, Denver, Colorado; D. B. Waggener, P. O. Box 304, Philadelphia, Pa.; and Edward J. Pickett, Soldiers' National Home, Milwaukee, Wis.; for the foregoing three best anecdotes submitted before March 1st.)

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## A Great Speech.

A lawyer whose eloquence was of the spread-eagle sort was addressing the jury at great length, and his legal opponent, growing weary, went outside to rest.

"Mr. B—— is making a great speech," said a friend to the bored counsel.

"Oh, yes; Mr. B—— always makes a great speech. If you or I had occasion to announce that two and two make four, we'd be just fools enough to blurt it right out. Not so Mr. B——. He would say:

"If, by that arithmetical rule known as addition, we desired to arrive at the sum of two integers added to two integers, we should find—and I assert this boldly, sir, and without the fear of successful contradiction—we, I repeat, should find by the particular arithmetical formula before mentioned—and, sir, I hold myself perfectly responsible for the assertion I am about to make—that the sum of the two given integers added to the two other integers would be four!"—Selected by K. L. Willis from East Liverpool Tribune.

## S. Y. L.

A bereaved gentleman who had lost his intimate friend went to the florist and ordered a pillow of flowers, and he wanted put in it, in red flowers, the letters S. Y. L. The florist, very curious, said:

"My friend, will you please tell me what S. Y. L. stands for?"

"Oh, certainly, my dear sir—'See you later.'"—F. C.

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## A Matter of Principle.

"Is you all gwine to hang up any mistletoe dis Christmas?" asked Mr. Erastus Pinkley.

"Deed I isn'," answered Mrs. Miami Brown. "I'ze got a little too much pride to advertise foh de ordinary courtesies dat a lady has a right to expect."—Selected by K. C. Towle from Marin County Journal.

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## Mr. Childs's Advice.

The late George W. Childs, proprietor of The Philadelphia Ledger, gave pecuniary help to many men and women, but he was always careful that the beneficiaries were deserving people.

One day a young man came to his office and asked for a loan to aid him in starting in business.

"Do you drink?" asked Mr. Childs.

"Yes, once in a while," answered the young man.

"Stop it! Stop it for a year, and then come to see me."

The young man broke off the habit at once, and at the end of a year he called on Mr. Childs again.

"Do you smoke?" asked the gentleman.

"Yes."

"Stop it! Stop it for a year, and then come to see me."

The young man had a hard time of it, but he succeeded in breaking the habit, and at the end of the year presented himself at Mr. Child's office.

"Do you chew?" asked Mr. Childs.

"Yes, I do," was the desperate answer.

"Stop it! Stop it for a year, and then come to see me."

The young man stopped chewing, but he never went back to Mr. Child's office. When his friends asked him why he did not go, he said:

"Simply because he would have told me that since I had stopped drinking and smoking and chewing I ought to have money enough to start myself in business—and I have."—Adapted from The Little Chronicle by D. B. W.

## Went Over with the Bucket.

W. H. Kilgore tells a story of a Celt who, hard-pushed for work, asked the captain of a coasting vessel for employment of some kind. He was told to get references, and returned with a bundle wholly satisfactory to the captain, who engaged him as a deckhand. A few minutes afterward a German walked on deck, asked for work, and was told to go and report to the mate. Casey noted that the newcomer had not been asked for references, and wondered much. The third day out, as the German was washing the decks with a bucket and a swab, the ship keeled badly in the trough of a rough sea, and a wave that swept over the deck carried German, bucket and swab into the water. Casey, the only man on board who saw the accident, rushed in glee to the captain and said:

"Yez made me bring references, didn't yez?"

"Certainly," replied the captain.

"Yez asked th' Dootchman for none?"

"What of it?" asked the captain, getting angry.

"Nawthin'—nawthin,' captain," replied Casey, airily, "but he's gone with your bucket!"—Selected by O. H. from The Philadelphia Ledger.

## A Good Chance.

A porter in London was engaged in clearing a luggage van, when the door swung back, striking him violently on the head.

"Oh, Pat!" he exclaimed to an Irishman standing on the platform, "I believe I have opened my head."

"Bedad, and now's the time to put something in it," was Pat's witty reply. —Selected from The Household by Miss Morris.

## She Had the Best of It.

The artist of whom the Philadelphia Press tells was of the impressionist school. He had just given the last touches to a purple and blue canvas when his wife came into his studio.

"My dear," said he, "this is the landscape I wanted you to suggest a title for."

"Why not call it 'Home'?" she said, after a long look.

"'Home?' Why?"

"Because there's no place like it," she replied meekly, as becomes a wife who is entirely without imagination.—Selected from The Youth's Companion, by Annie K. Chatterfield.

## A Little Smutty.

Anthony Comstock, the well-known reformer, was the butt of a joke perpetrated by some traveling minstrels who happened to stop off in the little village of Summit, N. J., a town situated in the hills on the D., L. & W. Railroad, and the home of Mr. Comstock.

It being an old-time minstrel troupe, the members were all made up in burnt cork.

Sambo: "Good evening, Mr. Comstock! Good evening, sir! How is your good health this evening, sir?"

(The audience upon hearing the name of so prominent a person, turned in their seats to see where he could be, knowing that he never had been to any such performance before at the hall, and that he very seldom, if ever, had honored them with his presence before at any entertainment.) Sambo kept on looking at the gallery and bowing, but finally his face changed. He became very grave and shouted:

"Look here, Mr. Comstock! Look here, sir! What do you mean, sir, by patronizing a show sir, that is off color?"—VANARB.

## New Anecdote of Talmage.

In 1890 I was chairman of the Committee on Entertainment of a teachers' institute being held at Osage City, Kans., and had secured the services of Dr. Talmage as a lecturer. It chanced that the night before the doctor's arrival there had been an attempted burglary in the little city, then consisting of 5,000 or 6,000 inhabitants, in which a dozen or more shots were exchanged between the burglar and the citizen whose house was being robbed. There was a lamp burning dimly in the room, and when the citizen's wife woke her husband, saying, "There is a man in the house!" he began shooting, the first shot extinguishing the light. The only shot that took effect, desperately wounded the burglar in the groin, though six bullets perforated the pillows of the bed. The wounded burglar was carried off to jail.

Dr. Talmage arrived the evening before his lecture, and about 10 o'clock I asked him if he would like to go and see the wounded prisoner. He assented, and we went to the jail. The prisoner would give no name but "Jim."

"Here's Dr. Talmage, Jim," said I, "and he wants to know your name."

"Jim," said the prisoner; "that's enough."

"Would you like to have the doctor pray for you?" I asked.

"Yes," he said, "and then turning to Dr. Talmage, he added, "I know you, doctor; I've heard you preach in Brooklyn often."

The doctor knelt and prayed fervently for the prisoner for fifteen minutes or more, and later we returned to the hotel.

The next morning I went again to the hotel about 8 o'clock and asked if Dr. Talmage had yet arisen.

"He has but just retired," said the hotel clerk. "After you left last night he went back again to the jail and stayed with that burglar until 7 o'clock this morning."

I was satisfied that none but a true Christian who believed what he taught would thus sacrifice a night's rest to succor and console an unknown criminal.

After his engagement with us the doctor went on to Winfield, Kans., where he had another lecture engagement. On his return, as the train stopped at our little city, the doctor leaned out of the car window and asked a youngster:

"My boy, did the burglar die?"

"Yes, sir," answered the boy, and then added, "Say, mister, was that your brother?"—Selected by Lawrence B. Fletcher, from the Washington Post.

## Found the Shirt.

A man who must go daily into the coal mines of Nova Scotia soon abandons the habit of cleanliness. Not only is the fight against coal dust invariably a losing one, but the skin made sensitive by scrubbing is keenly irritated by the minute particles of coal. Applying the principle of Æsop's mule, which found himself protected by the gnats that had already drunk their fill of his blood, the miner finds protection in a permanent dust covering.

On one occasion, a miner who had "made his pile" treated himself to a journey to Quebec. Upon his arrival he went to a hotel and secured a room and bath. He got into the tub and set to work. Later, he told the result to a friend.

"I jest knuckled down to it, and after I'd been to work about two hours I come to a shirt I'd put on two years before and plum lost sight of. And if it warn't the identical shirt I'd killed Bill McGinney's old goat fur eatin' off the clo's line, 'cause I couldn't find it nowhere."—MARY ALDEN HOPKINS.

## What He Got.

"I was out stumping Ohio during a recent campaign," said General Isaac R. Sherwood, "and had been making a long and tiresome jump by train with no opportunity to get anything to eat. I arrived at my destination pretty nigh famished, for I had endured a long, hard day. I made directly for the hotel dining-room, where the young girl rattled off the usual jumble of bifstkprkstklamchiphamanssage.

"I can't hear very well at best, so I generally look about, noting what the others are eating and order accordingly. The only other man in the room at the time was sitting next to me and was just giving his order, so I told the girl to bring me the same. She trotted off while I endeavored to calm my ravenous appetite during the wait that followed.

"In due course of time she returned and placed before me—what do you think—a bowl of hot water and some dried bread. The man next to me was a dyspeptic."—GEO. W. STEVENS.

## Mixed Bier.

A minister who had been in the habit of using set phrases, resolved to change these and use new expressions. The first opportunity which presented itself was a funeral. He usually said:

"A few minutes will now be given to view the corpse."

This time he said,

"An opportunity will now be given to pass around the bier (beer)."—CARRIE SIGAL.

## Named the Club.

Some years ago several gentlemen were seated in a café in Boston discussing some matters of business, and were so deeply engrossed that they did not see a man sitting near at hand listening to their conversation until they had nearly finished. The subject of their conversation was more or less private and should not have been discussed in such a place. One of these gentlemen whose business was being talked over grew very angry, but having no redress, it being a public place, it struck him that the privacy of a club could be used to much more advantage, so shortly afterwards he gave a dinner in a hall hired for the purpose and invited all the men of his acquaintance to attend. The subject of a club was brought up and preliminaries were arranged; when it came to a name, several were mentioned, but none seemed suitable. A long argument followed and as it was growing late one of the gentlemen suggested that if no name could be agreed upon by 10 o'clock that all should keep absolute silence until someone should get tired and say something. The word or sentence then uttered was to form the basis of a name.

Now the janitor's name was Quinn, who had charge of the hall, and as the hands of the clock pointed to the hour of midnight he sent his helper to see that everybody had gone home and that all the lights were out. The man having gone the rounds, reached the room where all the men were sitting and not hearing any sound as he opened the door of the room, shouted:

"All gone, Quinn." There was a burst of applause and the name taken was composed of the sentence, making Algonquin.—VANARE.

## A Quarrelsome Creature.

During the war an old negro woman belonging to a Southern family, was wont to ask many questions about anything that appealed to her interest, and while her mistress sat one morning beguiling the time with reading, Aunt Prudence appeared in the door-way.

Standing with arms akimbo, she espied on the mantle the statuettes of two famous generals. Squinting an eye, and turning her head, that was bound in a bandanna handkerchief, she inquired:

"What yo doin wid dem dolls on de shelf, Miss Liza?"

"Why, Aunt Prudence," she replied "they are not dolls. They are statues. This is Napoleon, the greatest French general, and that is Alexander-the-Great, who conquered the whole known world and then wept for want of more worlds to conquer."

For a moment the old woman's face was grave, then she slowly ejaculated: "M-m-m, He war a pore, qurralsome critter"—Marianna Sugg.

## Danger to the Rear-Guard.

When the war began with Spain the people in the South were as much interested as those in any other part of the country, and all classes were eager for news from the fleets and the army. The colored people were even more numerous than the white around the bulletin boards, where the newspapers mixed up, in true yellow fashion, fiction and fact. One day, in Asheville, a negro man, who showed by the marks on his dress that he was a whitewash artist, was on the outskirts of the crowd. A lawyer of local note spoke to him:

"Are you going to the wars, Jim?"

"What I goin' to de war fur?"

"To fight for your country, of course."

"I don't know nuthin' 'bout fightin'."

"That won't do, Jim. The last war was all about you niggers, and this time you have got to do the fighting. This is your country now and the niggers must be made to save it."

"Who goin' to make de nigger fight?" asked Jim, in a sulky tone, and showing more white in his eyes than usual. "How yar goin' to make de niggers fight?"

"Oh, we'll make em fight easy enough," said the lawyer. "We'll put the niggers in front, and then the white soldiers will stand behind, and make the niggers do the fighting."

"'Pears to me," said Jim, slowly, and with much gravity, "dat de white folks gittin' ready to be run over."—Selected from Harper's Magazine, by Eleanor Marchant.

## A Personal Reminiscence.

Before his death, Senator L. C. La Mar was noted among Washingtonians for his absent-mindedness. In those times many of the cars were without conductors, and on entering you dropped your five cents into the box, or, needing change, poked the driver through a hole in the front door.

One day I saw the figure of the big Southerner enter the car, and as he was an old friend, I made room for him beside me. Before taking the seat, however, he went forward and absently dropped a silver dollar in the box.

"Senator," I said, touching him on the arm, "You just put a dollar in the box, and the fare is only five cents."

"To be sure, to be sure," he answered, nodding his thanks, and to the amusement of all the passengers, he drew some change from his pocket, carefully selected a nickle and dropped it in beside his dollar.—S. ENGLISH.

## The Parson and the Tea.

Dr. F., a well known clergyman of East Tennessee, having heard many stories of the crudities still to be found in the mountainous part of that section, decided to undertake a "roughing it" expedition and find out for himself as to the truth of the reports. Accordingly, in company with several friends, he set out for the Smokies. Now the good doctor was especially fond of a certain brand of tea, and, having been warned of the danger that his party ran of getting into a belt of territory where bacon, black coffee and cornbread form the sole articles of diet for breakfast, dinner and supper, he resolved to carry along a supply of English Breakfast sufficient for himself and the others, and surprise them at the proper moment.

After arrangements had been made

for spending the night at a little cabin in the heart of the Great Smoky Range, Dr. F. gleefully slipped his package of tea out of the saddle pockets and carried it to the mistress of their temporary lodging-house.

"I suppose you know how to brew tea," said the doctor somewhat doubtfully, as he handed it to the woman; "I am very fond of it for my supper."

"Wal, I reckin I do," was the indignant reply.

Supper time arrived, and the guests were all assembled at the table in a rather anxious state of mind as the parson offered thanks for the cornbread and bacon at either end of the board. But now came the triumphal entry and the climax of the parson's little dream, as the woman placed on the center of the table a huge bowl of greens, steaming hot from the fire, saying as she did so, "Thar warn't more'n enough fer one mess, parson, but I reckin ye warn't fergit atter this that I kin cook up a batch of tea greens as good as yer women-folks in the valley."

NORMAN H. PITMAN.

## The Minister's Dog.

The Rev. Hiram Mellish had nearly reached his home on one beautiful Sunday morning when his attention was suddenly drawn to a group of small boys in a nearby field. They were sitting on the ground in the form of a circle and were, apparently, deeply interested in something before them. Thinking that perhaps an accident of some sort had occurred, the good man turned into the field and approached the group. He found that the something was, in reality, a very small dog and, also, that the boys were engaged in the very unholy pastime of telling falsehoods for the possession of the captive; the one who, in the opinion of the others, told the biggest lie to be the winner.

That the minister was shocked there can be no doubt, for, upon discovering what they were doing, he exclaimed:

"Boys, do you not know that it is very wicked to tell that which is not true?"

There were a few very faint smiles, but no response, and the man continued:

"Besides, to-day is the Sabbath. Now, when I was a child little boys did not do this sort of thing——"

A wild yell interrupted him as the boys, springing to their feet, cried:

"Give him the dog!"

—LEWIS A. WENTWORTH.

## The Colonel's Parrot.

Colonel Bouncer, of Her Majesty's Forces in India, had a parrot of which he was very proud. It spoke English fluently, with the true London accent, and could repeat anything that it heard. The colonel says that it did not, however, always repeat things right away, but stored them up in its mind for future use.

One day the bird was missing; it had either been stolen or had flown away to its native woods, and the colonel was inconsolable. He offered a big reward for its recovery, but no one came to claim it, and he at last made up his mind that the bird was gone for good.

He was riding through the woods one afternoon, several weeks after his loss, when he heard a human voice speaking in a rather loud tone, and he turned aside to see who it was. Imagine his astonishment when he saw, in a little glade, a great flock of parrots arranged in a circle, and, perched in the middle of the circle, his own long-lost bird. It was teaching the others the Lord's Prayer!—Selected by D. B. W. from B. M. Croker's Diana Barrington.

## A Definition of Matrimony.

Archbishop Ryan, visiting a small parish in a mining district for the purpose of administering confirmation, aske one nervous little girl what matrimony was, and she answered that it was "a state of terrible torment

which those who enter it are compelled to undergo for a time to prepare them for a brighter and better world."

"No, no," remonstrated the pastor; "that isn't matrimony; that's the definition of purgatory."

"Leave her alone," said the archbishop; "maybe she's right. What do you or I know about it?"—Selected by E. L. Bostwick from Cleveland Leader.

### A Lunatic's Repartee.

Some visitors were being shown through Kew Lunatic Asylum, Victoria, and, coming opposite the clock in the corridor, one of them, looking quickly at his watch, said:

"Is that clock right?"

"No, you idiot," said a patient standing by; "it wouldn't be in here if it were."—Selected by Ralph A. Lyon from the Melbourne Australasian.

### A Way to Tell Him.

The following is an anecdote told me by a friend:

A small boy was standing just outside his father's farm-yard gate when a kind neighbor saw him and cried out:

"Hello, my son; where's your father?"

"He's in the pig pen," replied the youngster. "You'll know him; he's got a hat on."—Miss S. W. SMITH.

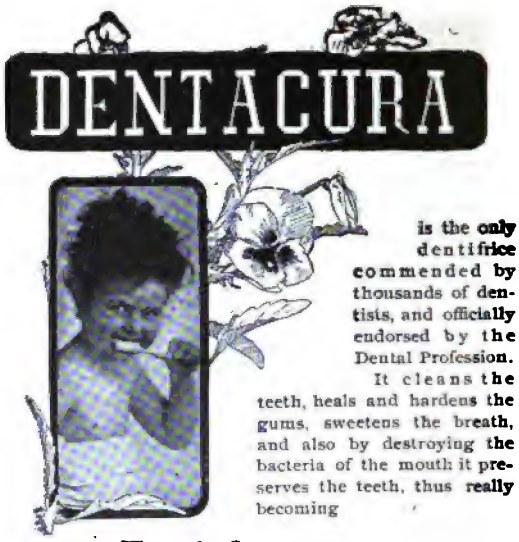
### Clever Mark!

Several years ago, while Mark Twain was connected with a publishing house, he went into a bookstore in New York, and, picking up a volume, asked the price. He then suggested that as a publisher he was entitled to 50 per cent. discount. To this the clerk assented:

"As I am an author," proceeded Mark, "it would appear that I am again entitled to 50 per cent. discount."

Again the clerk bowed.

"And as a personal friend of the proprietor," the humorist modestly continued, "I presume that you will allow me the usual 25 per cent. discount."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Once more the salesman managed to produce an impressive bow.

"Well," drawled the unblushing speaker, "under these conditions I think may as well take the book. What's the price?"

The clerk calmly took up his pencil and began to figure industriously. Then he announced the result with the greatest obsequiousness. "As near as I can calculate," said he, "we owe you the book and about thirty-seven and one-half cents. Call again."—Selected by Miss Morris.

### Grantesque.

When the Republicans were running James G. Blaine for President and had organized the huge parade that took place at that time in New York, they asked General U. S. Grant to review it.

After the affair was over, one of the managers said to him:

"General, was not that the largest body of men that you have ever seen in a parade?"

"No," replied Grant, quietly. "The largest was when I reviewed the Federal army in '65. It took three days for those men—marching continuously—to pass the grand stand."

"Oh, yes," said the manager, a trifle impatiently. "But I meant a Repulican parade."

"I thought that was," said the General.— E. KING.

### A Slight Mistake.

Shortly after the play, Ben Hur, was presened in Cleveland, two women, stood looking into the window of an art store on Euclid avenue. The picture that particularly attracted their attention was a beautifully colored copy of Guido Reni's Aurora.

After gazing admiringly a few moments, one woman was heard to exclaim to the other:

"Oh, what a lovely picture of the Ben Hur chariot race!"

—ERMINNIE E. BELL.


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## Mistook Her Joy.

Judge Cross relates the following incident:

It was one of those brilliant Commencement occasions which, for more than a century, have added prestige and glory to the name of old Dartmouth. Many distinguished men had gathered from distant States to pay the tribute of loyal affection to Alma Mater. Between the conferring of honorary degrees and the orations of the graduating class, there was seductive music, now as subtly sweet as the sighing of a zephyr, now bursting into a crescendo of melody that vibrated with the triumph and auspicious joy of the moment.

'Mid the rustle of silken garments and the noiseless waving of dainty, perfumed fans sat many a fair one who had come to see her son, brother, friend or lover receive his degree.

The third senior was well under way with his oration, and very manly and handsome was he in all the dignity of cap and gown, to which was added the coveted bit of crimson ribbon. As he spoke, those sitting a little to his left in the vast audience observed the color come and go with unmistakable significance in the sweet face of a little woman dressed in black. The final sentence was delivered, and the speaker took his seat amid a thunder of applause. Again the dulcet notes of mellow strings shuddered out upon the soft June air, and it was noticed that the little woman was weeping gently, but, nevertheless, quite freely. The sweet face, framed in soft glossy hair, was hidden behind her fan, that her boy might not see how the stress of the moment and the pride of her mother's heart had wrought upon her.

Suddenly an old lady sitting behind her leaned forward and tapped her gently on the shoulder, saying, with all the honest sympathy of her soul:

"My dear, I wouldn't take it so! Don't cry! Mebbe he'll do better next time!"—Mrs. Elizabeth Horen.

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# Cinderella's Granddaughter: By Guy Chantepleure, translated from the French by M. L. Meyers. Illustrations by Florence England Noseworthy*

PIERRETTE RÉMONT was painting a fan. Bent over the flexible sheet of silk, where the delicate brush of the young girl artist had thrown the dainty flight of a swarm of white butterflies; absent-minded, absorbed in her work, she had not

*Translated for Short Stories.

noticed the rather indistinct sound of the front door. On seeing the snowy hair and bonnet of mauve flowers of Mme. Charlier appear, she rose quickly—

"Aunt Gertrude! How welcome you are! And in this awful weather!"

"My brother is out?" asked the old lady. Upright in her waterproof cloak, she seemed not to pay any attention to the armchair, pushed close up to the fire for her. Changeable as the sky and the sea, Mme. Charlier was charming on her good days, and insupportable on her days of tempest. This Saturday she had a long nose and a pinched smile.

"Bad sign," thought Pierrette, while offering her her cheek. The light which came through the muslin curtains, the dull, wretched light, seemed to smile and become sunny while reflected in her blue eyes, while caressing the golden locks of Pierrette. But the gay, fair face that had the power to make the light joyous, did not possess that of giving the nose or the smile of Mme. Charlier their normal proportions. It received only a forced kiss.

"My father is at the Lyceum for his classes, Aunt Gertrude," replied the young girl, "He will regret—"

"My visit, is it not so? I don't believe a word of it—What has become of him? What does he do? For a month past I have not seen him."

"I hardly see him, myself," replied Pierrette. "You know the scientific enthusiasms of my dear papa. He is occupied at present with industrial chemistry, and as he hopes to have discovered a very interesting process for dyeing materials, he devotes all his free time to the experiments, which infatuate him. He seeks a preparation—"

"He would better seek a husband for you," interrupted Mme. Charlier, in a most trenchant voice.

"A husband, Aunt Gertrude!—but our old friend, Mme. Desmoulins, has found a superb—"

At these words Mme. Charlier started violently:

"Then it is true what I have heard? Monsieur Ferny has asked for you? But if he had done so, unhappy child, how could you refuse him?"

A sweet, fresh laugh rippled out.

"Question for question, Aunt Gertrude: How could I accept him? He is not good-looking, M. Ferny."

"Good-looking; no, certainly not," agreed Mme. Charlier,

with frigid dignity. "M. Ferny is neither handsome nor ugly."

"That is correct," gravely declared Pierrette. "He is neither handsome nor ugly—but rather ugly—neither young nor old—but rather old; neither intelligent nor stupid—but rather—"

"Words, my dear! M. Ferny would not be a man to capture the imagination of a romantic boarding-school miss, but his respectability is indisputable, and his income handsome enough to make a sensible girl dream. It was an unexpected chance for you, who have not one sou of *dot*. I am astonished that your father has not understood this better."

"Oh, my father has not in any way sought to influence me," said Pierrette. "He has raised me in the American way, you know, and has always rather encouraged than combated the independence of character that was natural to me. However, I rather think that we understand each other, he and I, in thinking that the 'young girl without *dot*, like the better provided for young girls, has the right and also the duty not to marry thoughtlessly.' I am nineteen, and St. Catherine is still far off, and if I should arrange that famous head dress I should not feel myself dishonored by the ribbons. I am rich in my modest tastes and in my activity. My little works of art already permit we to provide in part for my maintenance. Nothing, truly, obliges me to marry a position or a fortune. If I marry, my dear aunt, it is because good luck has made me meet a man of heart who would know how to love me without caring for a *dot*, which I have not, and how to inspire me also with esteem and tenderness for which I might be happy to give him my life—there!'"

"I advise you, in any case, my little one, not to count on me to help good luck," declared Aunt Gertrude, always bitter.

"Bah! You are going to be charged with a less distasteful task; that of getting my cousin married. Do you expect it soon? I look forward with delight to seeing her—my dear Marcelle."

At the name of her god-daughter, the only daughter of Etienne Rémont, her favorite brother, Mme. Charlier was at last, and as if miraculously, cheerful.

Etienne Rémont had trebled, in a large breeding enter-

prise, a fortune already ample, which his wife had brought him.

Pretty, well brought up, very largely dowried, Marcelle was just entering her twenty-second year without any husband judged acceptable by her having been proposed as yet, in the little town, in the very rural suburbs of which she dwelt with her parents; and the dearest desire of Mme. Charlier—Pierrette had received this confidence—was to marry this beloved niece near her, at Paris.

"Marcelle arrives in three days, my child," responded the old lady, almost sweetly. "I will take care of her for a month or six weeks if she enjoys herself. And she *shall* enjoy herself. Two days after her arrival she will make her Parisian début at the matinée which the Prével-Desforges give Thursday, for the mi-carême, a ball of Pierrots and Pierrettes; it will be charming. Oh, the invitations are not lacking for this dear little one; and I hope, in fact, that when she returns to Normandy her future will be established."

"It is certain that her future will be more easy to establish than mine," said Pierrette drolly. "She is ravishing to begin with—and then you can scarcely reproach her with not having a sou—or lots of them."

This remark piqued Mme. Charlier.

"Do you think, then," cried she, "that I count on the allurement of a fortune to marry my god-daughter? No, no; I know that Marcelle will be espoused for her beauty and her merits. I will be careful not to present her to the world as an heiress. No one here will know that Marcelle is rich."

In her partiality and her inconsequence Mme. Charlier, after having declared that, lacking a "*dot*," her niece Pierrette should be content to espouse the first comer, found it very probable that her niece Marcelle should make a charming

marriage while passing for poor. This enormous partiality amused Pierrette, who yielded to the innocent pleasure of teasing her aunt.

"*Everybody* will know that Marcelle is rich, my aunt, *everybody*. It is I who tell you this," said she, shaking her head. "These things are always known. Who says even that you will not be the first to betray your secret—that you have betrayed it already?" pursued Pierrette, with a deep air.

Mme. Charlier fairly jumped.

"Me!"

"Yes, my aunt, you! Have you not already spoken of Marcelle?"

"I have spoken of Marcelle, but not of her dowry."

"To no one? You are sure of it? To no one?"

"To no one, naturally; or, at least, it is all the same—I have spoken of this unfortunate dowry only to my old friend Mme. Saugé who is discretion itself. You will acknowledge—"

"That Mme. Saugé will keep her own counsel? If you wish—but she may have an interest in keeping quiet. Who can prove to me that she does not dream of personally making a profit of this confidence. Look here, aunt, has she not a son, this Mme. Saugé?—a brother, a nephew—a "poor boy" who could die of love as soon as he shall have met Marcelle?"

Mme. Charlier shrugged her shoulders.

"Eh! very likely; precisely, she has a nephew," she confessed. "But it is as if she had not, because she is very sensible and knows that this nephew is not the companion for Marcelle. He possesses only five or six thousand francs of income that his parents left him; and although he has studied well and won every diploma, he has not yet dreamed, since the year that he returned from his military service, of seeking a useful employment in science. He is a dilettante, one of those eternal truants who deprive themselves of the wherewithal for breakfast to go to the theatre or to buy a knick-knack."

"And you believe, my aunt," sweetly asked the young girl, "that this gentleman will not find it more agreeable to marry Marcelle than to go without his breakfast?"

A flush of anger abruptly invaded the bony cheeks of Mme. Charlier, but the shock was so severe that no crushing reply occurred to her.

"I am certain that Mme. Saugé destines Marcelle for her nephew," continued Pierrette.

"Mme. Saugé could not even present her nephew to Marcelle," affirmed Mme. Charlier, recovering a little, and entirely triumphant at having found an argument that she judged unanswerable. "She has been very sick and has been settled at Cannes now for eight days. It was the eve of her departure that I had the opportunity to speak to her of Marcelle and of my plans."

"If she cannot present her nephew to you, she will arrange a meeting accidentally, *voilà tout!*"

"Pierrette!" cried Mme. Charlier, beside herself, "one would say that you had sworn to make me fly into a passion."

Pierrette had a concerned air.

"I?" she said. "Oh, my aunt!"

And with the prompt movement of a coaxing child she flung her arms about her aunt's neck.

"Do not scold me, although I deserve it a little," she pleaded. "I have a prayer to address to you, my aunt—if you scold me I will never dare to. Thursday, the day of mi-carême and of the Prévels' ball, I shall be free as the air, and I wish so much to see Marcelle in costume!"

"Come to breakfast with us Thursday, my little one. Marcelle will dress early, and I shall be charmed to have you see her. The costume that I have ordered is a marvel!" responded Mme. Charlier, complacently.

Then she added, suddenly tender; she had veered about:

"Poor little Cinderella! You have never been to a ball!"

"I would love dearly to go to them, my aunt, but they are too expensive, the balls;" then, "My fans go there for me," declared Pierrette with philosophy.

And her smiling glance went to caress the white butterflies that glided so prettily over the pale blue of the silk.

"My poor child! I regret not being richer! when I think that you have no other pleasure than this of painting, and that all your youth is being passed in this narrow street, in this sombre house—"

But Pierrette still smiled.

"Bah!" said she, "It is not the sombre houses—it is the sombre people; because there are some people who are unhappy or tired of themselves. Me, I am gay because I am happy and because I never weary of myself."

After the departure of Mme. Charlier, the little fan-maker had returned to her work. Under the caress of her brush the white butterflies throbbed, like her, happy to live; and suddenly it seemed to Pierrette that, with them, on their wings, delicate as flower petals, her own dreams, her beautiful young girl-dreams, flew away very far, very high, to traverse the blue space.

"My little Pierrette, I am broken-hearted."

Such were the first words that greeted Pierrette Rémont after she entered her aunt's *salon* the following Thursday.

"Marcelle has not come?" cried the young girl.

"Marcelle has arrived," replied Mme. Charlier, "but she had to take cold on the way, and now behold her in bed, very feverish, entirely knocked-up, with grippe, or something like it!"

"What ill-luck, what stupid ill-luck!" said Pierrette, slowly tapping the carpet with the tip of her little foot. "Poor Marcelle! And I who came to ask you—"

"What then, my dear?"

"Oh, now it is useless. With Marcelle ill, I would inconvenience you too much. Papa has found an excellent opportunity to try his invention in a factory at Vosges, and, as he could, by getting a substitute for two classes, absent himself this week and not return until Tuesday, he went this morning. Then, the tête-a-tête with our old Thérèse not attracting me at all, I had thought that perhaps you would consent—"

"To offer your hospitality?" finished Mme. Charlier.

"Yes, aunt, it would have been such a charming way to see Marcelle."

"It is settled; I will take care of you," agreed Mme. Charlier, with a cordial earnestness. "Marcelle will be quite delighted to have you about her. The poor child is terribly bored."

Marcelle was as calm and thoughtful as Pierrette was lively and heedless, but with different natures, and although their intimacy was a little superficial, the two cousins loved each other sincerely. Too rare to please them, the hours when they were reunited appeared to them always sweet and joyful.

After the warm kisses of re-union, Pierrette had seated herself by the head of Marcelle's bed and at once the clear voice of the visitor and the languid voice of the invalid commenced their rather childish duet,

"And the Prével-Desforges' ball!" cried Pierrette suddenly. "The poor, pretty white ball; it was to-day. What ill luck, my little one."

In the depths of her pillow, Marcelle smiled.

"The Prévels' white ball. May I confess something to you, my dear? Well, I do not in the least regret this ball. It frightened me, you see. To be invited without parents by M. Max and Mlle. Suzanne Prével, the son and daughter of the house, a new style it seems! The father and mother of the young people who will receive, chaperone everyone. So, you understand, I, who am not very brave, would feel myself a little handicapped. What I regret, though, is my costume. Oh, Pierrette, the costume! Wait, look there, on the little couch, lift up that big cloth."

Pierrette obeyed with enthusiasm, and a cry of admiration escaped her.

"Oh, Marcelle, how white it is!"

Pierrette loved white passionately, with delight. She would have been unable at this moment to say how Marcelle's costume was made, but her eyes were intoxicated by all the white which had just appeared to her—white, snowy and quivering, of silk muslin, luminous white ribbons and large rosettes of satin; changeable, rustling white of the taffeta, cut in a train. Oh, how white it was—ideally white, this costume. One would have said that a fairy ring had created the whole thing, that no human hand had touched this daintiness, this freshness, this fragileness of soft materials. She looked; she admired; she admired sweetly, gaily, with love of the art; without a regret, a bitter comparison coming to trouble her, this joy that she experienced at seeing a pretty thing, elegant and fine.

"Oh, Marcelle!" said she again, "I have never dreamt of anything more exquisite! Can you not wear your costume to another ball?"

Marcelle was amused at this astonishment.

"Alas, no," said she; "The season of costume dances will be over to-morrow. It will not be worn, this pretty costume, my poor Pierrette—at least, unless—but yes—why not?—a good idea!"

Pierrette questioned with her eyes, astonished.

"Pierrette," replied the young girl, gayly, "if you should go to the Prévels' ball in my place?"

A sort of stupor which resembled ecstacy had transfixed the expressive features of Pierrette.

"We are the same height, the costume will fit you. And it will be so amusing, my little Pierrette, so amusing!"

"And Aunt Gertrude?"

"Aunt Gertrude will write a word or two to Mme. Prével to warn her of this little change of program, and it will be all right. She is charming, my god-mother; she does everything that I wish. Pierrette, I implore you!"

Pierrette smiled. She looked at her own rather sombre dress; she looked again at the white costume, and then at Marcelle. Suddenly she ran to the invalid and threw herself on her neck.

"Since you wish it, I will go to the ball," said she. "It is like a story, and I believe I am dreaming. Thanks, Madame Fairy!"

More than once, in the course of the evening, Pierrette believed herself living "in a story." Cinderella, at the King's ball, could not have been more dazzled than Pierrette since she had entered the *salons*, sumptuously decorated with white flowers, where all the white world, a world elegant, smart, bedecked, gliding, turning, fluttered under the lights, carried along by the joyous rhythm of a waltz.

In the midst of the white people, Pierrette appeared all white. She smiled at the mirrors, astonished to find herself so pretty. She had no fear; no agony of timidity troubled her rapture. In putting on Marcelle's costume she had become a new being; a little snow-flake who dreamed of nothing but to whirl about.

Immediately, Suzanne Prével had led her into a group of Pierrettes, who had welcomed her fraternally; then someone had presented to them some dancers, a group of Pierrots. The Pierrots were the most polite in the world; they all looked alike, all danced well, all smiled at Pierrette and said pleasant things to her. They were little personages who also seemed to have nothing of reality about them. Some black coats, four or five at the most, made dark spots in the crowd of these friends of the moonlight. Oh, the delicious, the true white ball! Pierrette enjoyed herself. She enjoyed herself prettily, freshly; there was so much frankness in her pleasure, so much

innocence of soul in her gayety, that the people about her smiled to see her smile, felt joyous in her joy.

Once, as she was seated near a large vase of white flowers, a black coat came toward her, conducted by one of the Pierrots who had danced with her.

"Will you permit me, mademoiselle," said the Pierrot, "to present to you one of my friends, M. Roger Marçay?"

The black coat obtained a waltz. He was very young, very slim and very elegant. He had a blonde mustache, and dark eyes that smiled softly. He waltzed better than any of the Pierrots; guided by him she forgot the little experiences of a new dancer; she felt deliciously carried away with the impression of scarcely touching the earth with the tips of her white slippers.

They danced thus a moment without speaking, as though astonished and satisfied that their movements, their steps, harmonized so perfectly. Pierrette thought that the waltz was an exquisite thing.

It was the black coat—Roger Marçay, to call him by his name—who first commenced to speak; he excused himself earnestly for his miserable, sombre-hued suit. But just then, in passing before one of the mirrors, which had showed her

the beauty of the dark outline of the slight figure, Pierrette said to herself that the contrast was pleasant, of the simple and correct black suit with the frivolous white, the capricious white of silk muslins. She had also said that, elegant and fine as it might be, the costume of a Pierrot was always the costume of a clown and could never agree with I know not what of a little haughtiness and even of a little domination which seemed to her ought to be a charm belonging to a young man, intelligent, loyal and conscious of his worth. She explained, ingenuously, something of her opinion on this point to M. Roger Marçay, who smiled with a contented air; as if a little jealous of the Pierrots the instant before, he felt suddenly reassured.

He next spoke of the ball.

"I do not ask you if you are enjoying yourself, mademoiselle—oh, it would be useless. Your eyes, which sparkle; your lips, which smile, have already answered me. Heavens, but it is charming to see that there are yet young girls capable of enjoying themselves thus, with all their heart."

She gave a little laugh, intoxicated with delight, that dropped like an arpeggio upon the rhythm of the waltz.

"If you only knew, monsieur; it is my first ball."

The black coat hastened to respond:

"But I do know it, mademoiselle."

They had stopped dancing and were walking in the winter garden. Pierrette questioned him with a smiling glance.

"Yes, I know it," gayly replied the young man. "Behold a miracle, I know your name, if you do ignore mine, and I knew to-day, this afternoon, that you would be at the Prévels' ball—your first ball!"

"You knew all this—before coming here?"

"Yes, mademoiselle. Do not seek to know how; the miracle is at least miraculous. I am the nephew of a very old friend of your aunt's."

Pierrette gave an involuntary cry.

"Of Mme. Saugé?"

"Of Mme. Saugé, precisely," tranquilly acquiesced the young man. "Then Mme. Saugé, who is in Cannes, but who had heard from Mme. Charlier that you had accepted the Prévels' invitation, whom she knew well—and whom I know very little—had enjoined me not, on any account, to miss the pretty frolic, and bid me dance there with her little friend,

Mlle. Rémont. The injunction was perhaps necessary, for I am not very worldly, but I assure you, the latter command was very needless."

Mlle. Rémont listened, a light smile curving the corners of her mouth.

The black coat, Roger Marçay, was the nephew of Mme. Saugé, and, well-trained by his aunt, the nephew of Mme.

Saugé believed himself dancing with Marcelle Rémont! The discovery seemed extremely droll to Pierrette, who certainly had not thought she was such a good prophet in her mischievous conjectures. She had not lost any time, Mme. Saugé, nor had her nephew. They wished to arrive first in the chase after an heiress. A spark glistened in the blue eyes, dark with pleasure. After permitting herself to tease her

aunt, Mlle. Rémont felt tempted, terribly tempted to make a little fun of the black coat and blonde mustache.

"Pierrette, my dear," she thought gayly, "the occasion which is offered you to learn the perfume of the incense which is burned before a well-dowried young lady will certainly not come again—profit by it!"

They commenced to dance again.

"It is in Normandy that you live?" said Roger.

The question was direct.

Pierrette did not hesitate a second.

"Yes, monsieur," she answered, "Normandy."

The die was cast. The conversation continued between Roger Marçay and Marcelle Rémont. However, Pierrette remained a third party to it; and it was entirely the life, the ideas, the sentiments of Pierrette that Marcelle expressed, that she placed in the required and fictitious frame; and it was the sweet and limpid laugh of Pierrette that, at times, sparkled between the phrases.

Roger Marçay did not rest satisfied with one waltz; he begged for others, and Pierrette gave him all that he asked. She did not know, to tell the truth, if she was playing a part; she enjoyed herself more and more; she was gay, content; she rejoiced to feel herself admired, because, if unusual to her, she was too acute not to notice that Mme. Saugé's nephew occupied himself very much with her—that he occupied himself with no one but her, nor danced, except from time to time, for conventionality, with the friends of Mme. Prével.

"He seems very much taken with Marcelle Rémont," thought she. "With eight hundred thousand francs dowry, that is not very arduous or difficult."

But, little by little, in proportion as the time advanced, this constancy did not continue without leaving some bitterness to her. He was kind, this young man. His smile, his eyes, were young and frank. To see him, to hear him, one would judge him at once good, intelligent. However, he knew no better, in the time of his youth, of great enthusiasms, large generosities, and great works, than to seek to give his life for a large dowry. For the first time Pierrette asked herself if the world was not as ugly, as mean, as painted to her sometimes by Aunt Gertrude.

When the moment of departure came, M. Marçay asked if Mme. Charlier always received on Monday.

"Monday yes, Monsieur," approved Pierrette.

"Poor boy, he wishes to see Marcelle again," thought she some moments later, while the carriage bore her along by the side of her aunt's maid.

One instant she remained dreamy; then she lightly shook her head with a decided little movement.

"After all, it was all right," she concluded, "I made fun of him."

Pierrette had talked a great deal of the ball to her aunt and Marcelle, but very little of Roger Marçay, saying incidentally, that Mme. Saugé's nephew was indeed at the Prévels' ball. Without confessing it to herself very clearly, she preferred that Mme. Charlier should still be ignorant of the little mystery for which she had rendered herself responsible.

However, the remembrance of this game, which had so greatly diverted her in the midst of a gay fever of delight and success, had not yet ceased to disquiet the young girl; for certainly with the first words which he would exchange with Madame Charlier, M. Marçay would know—would tell all. And M. Marçay had already announced his visit.

"Perhaps he will wait some days and will come only after my departure," hoped Pierrette.

She wished for this delay without much hope that it would be granted her. The day after the ball, as she went out, escorted by the maid, she had passed Roger Marçay at the entrance to her aunt's house; he had saluted her respectfully and continued on his way. This meeting repeated itself the following days; it was impossible for Pierrette to attribute it to chance.

She had tried to laugh: "And this Marcelle, who was completely in the power of her prosaic influenza, while a handsome young man dreamed sentimentally of the good luck of sharing her fortune." Then she said: "I wonder if I shall please him in town clothes," and she added quickly, "What is it to me whether I please him or not, since it is my dowry—the dowry of Marcelle that he wants? The important thing is that I shall have returned home before he comes!"

But Monday, early, at an hour when Mme. Charlier did not yet expect visits, Roger came.

"Ah, this is polite!" cried the old lady, "You bring me news of your dear aunt?"

Mme. Charlier was in a charming humor to-day; the weather

was good for her face and her spirits. Roger gave the news of his aunt, then he spoke of spring at Cannes and of spring at Paris, then suddenly he stopped, and, raising to Mme. Charlier his good frank eyes, where there smiled an emotion already half ashamed of itself:

"Dear madame," said ye, "I am going to confess to you frankly, stupidly, something formidable. This confession stifles me, pardon me in advance. I adore your niece, since the first moment when I saw her at the Prévels' ball, and it is of her—of whom I think all the time—that I speak to you."

It was said so ingenuously that Mme. Charlier smiled, a very sweet smile, which astonished her lips, which seemed to come from other times, like the beautiful dresses of her youth that she brought out again sometimes, all perfumed with Iris, in order to amuse her nieces.

"You love Pierrette?"

"She is called Pierrette? I did not know it. How the name suits her!" continued the young man. "Yes, madame, I love her. and I am so much afraid that she will not accept me, so afraid that—that I wished immediately to attempt the first step towards M. Rémont."

"Immediately! Ah, how you go!" repeated Mme. Charlier laughing. "But he is not in Paris, M. Rémont."

"I know! Therefore I am first addressing you, dear madame. Ah! I wish so much to know! Do you think that I will have any chance of being accepted? My fortune is very modest, and M. Rémont—"

"Oh!" interrupted Mme. Charlier, "my brother is an original character, whom the question of money does not concern at all, and who sees only through the eyes of his daughter. It is Pierrette whom it is necessary to gain to your cause. What is it, Berthe?" suddenly said Pierrette's aunt, turning toward the side where the door had just opened discreetly.

"M. le docteur is there."

"Good! I am coming."

Mme. Charlier had risen.

"I will not excuse myself for the rudeness that I commit in leaving you," said she, "because I expect to be very good and to beg Pierrette to replace me a moment with you. She is these days, the very faithful sick nurse of her cousin Marcelle, the daughter of my other brother, Etienne Rémont,

the one who lives in the provinces. This poor Marcelle came to me only to be put to bed. You know it is she who should have gone to the Prévels'; I had told your aunt. At the last moment Pierrette was able to profit by the invitation and the costume. I am coming immediately."

And leaving Roger in a stupor so complete that all questioning was frozen on his lips, Mme. Charlier went to receive the doctor.

"Marcelle. Marcelle Rémont," repeated the young man. "It was Marcelle who—and it is Pierrette who—but Pierrette then, Pierrette who spoke to me of her life in Normandy—Pierrette, the innocent little provincial, with whom I danced —Oh, Pierrette! Pierrette!"

When in a calm and very natural voice Mme. Charlier had begged Pierrette to take her place a moment in her duties as mistress of the house, the young girl had felt relieved. Nothing had yet disturbed the misunderstanding by which she was tormented, and the occasion was now offered to her to put an end to it. She would excuse herself with gentleness and humility, because, after all, she had acted badly, very badly. It was not for her to judge M. Marçay. Whether this stranger had or had not, proposed to marry an heiress, she had nevertheless taken the name of another young girl, she had nevertheless deceived M. Marçay, she had nevertheless lied to him.

When she entered the *salon*, her eyes fell in spite of herself; her hands trembled a little.

Timidly she commenced: "Monsieur, my aunt—"

But suddenly a hard voice, a rough voice that she did not know, startled her.

"Will you at last have the goodness, mademoiselle, to explain to me what happened Thursday? Some words of Mme. Charlier who has returned to *your cousin Marcelle*," he ironically laid stress on the words, "*her provincial niece*," the irony was accentuated, "have made me comprehend that at Mme. Prével's house I was your dupe — that you lied to me—"

But a reply abruptly cut short this accusation.

"Is it Madame, your aunt, who has brought you up so badly, monsieur?"

Pierrette had avenged herself. Ah! so it was dishonest!—if he took on that tone!

Roger expected excuses so much more than answers, that for a moment the reproach disconcerted him completely.

"Yes, monsieur, my aunt has two nieces," replied the young girl. "I am not called Marcelle; I am called Pierrette. I do not live in the provinces; I inhabit Batignolles. And as you had taken me for my cousin, I amused myself by telling you stories. Such is my crime! Everybody will tell you that on a carnival day or on mi-carême these things are not forbidden, and when you have recovered your *sang froid*, you will confess that these are very big words and very great anger for a simple trick, to which you have attached, permit me to say, a—ridiculous importance!"

"A ridiculous importance!" repeated Roger. "Ah, you find that I attach a ridiculous importance. Well, judge of that, mademoiselle. When a chance revealed to me that you had been playing with me, I had come to demand of your aunt her niece's hand."

This was not altogether true, but Roger was not in the humor to measure each word.

As for Pierrette, she felt in her turn, disconcerted. A colour mounted to her cheeks; but she recovered herself by a great effort, and, without modifying in the least the tone of aggressive irony that she had taken at the first attack:

"You behold me heart-broken, monsieur," said she, "to have been the cause of such a mistake. I had not expected, I confess, such a—precipitate demand. But be re-assured! It was a mistake of person: made under these conditions your offer is not valid, and, in a moment my aunt will be set right about the matter—by me."

She spoke with a studied calm. Roger regarded her.

"When I think," said he, "that what charmed me was the innocence of the fresh impressions, that I believed I divined in you—and that all these—this delighted astonishment, this confiding gayety, this candour, were only the trickery of a coquette—!"

"The trickery of a coquette!" cried Pierrette, beside herself.

"Only the trickery of a coquette, only an incomprehensible comedy," insisted Roger, "Yes, incomprehensible, for, after all, why have you amused yourself by thus ill-treating me—what was your object?"

"Why, monsieur?" said the young girl, whom this question had not restored to very amiable feelings. "Why, I am ready to tell you. Because my cousin Marcelle has a good dowry, and because the desire came to me to know, by experience—I, who am very poor—how the young men set about falling in love with a large dowry. *Voilà!*"

A flush mounted to Roger's face.

"Then you have thought that—"

"I thought that Mme. Saugé, your aunt, who knew Marcelle's circumstances, had been able to conceive for her nephew a very beautiful dream, and that the beautiful dream would smile on the nephew of Mme. Saugé. Yes, monsieur; but if I could have been thoughtless, mocking, wicked even, I was not a coquette, and I have not taken for myself, needless to tell you, either the homage or the proposal, which were meant for—Marcelle Rémont!"

"Well, you were wrong, mademoiselle," responded the young man, carried away by a grievous indignation, "and a few words will suffice to overwhelm you. Just now, I expressed to Mme. Charlier my desire to marry the young girl I had seen at the Prévels' ball—my intentions have not changed. Will you be my wife?"

But at this precise moment poor Roger knew not if he loved Pierrette or if he detested her, and this proposal of marriage, vibrant with exasperated anger of suffering, resembled less, it must be confessed, a declaration of love than a declaration of war.

"You are decidedly mistaken, monsieur," responded Mlle. Rémont, very cold now. "I thought only, I repeat to you, to amuse myself—a little foolishly, I admit, but I have acted like an ill-bred child, not at all like a young lady in quest of a husband, and I have not the least desire to marry you."

He would have spoken, but she stopped him.

"My answer is perfectly reasonable," continued she, "and entirely independent of the circumstances which have so unfortunately brought us together. I have always seen my father work, I have always worked myself; that is to say, that the habits which have been given me, like the examples which I have received, have taught me to—disdain a little those who do not work. I will never marry an idler."

Roger had become very pale, but the burst of anger which Pierrette expected in a sort of hostile grimness, did not come.

Roger bowed profoundly.

"You are right, mademoiselle," responded he, "but I assure you that if I have been—a little culpable, a little cowardly, in allowing myself, after three years in the Government School of Civil Engineers, and one year in the regiment, some months of liberty, of relaxation, of happy loafing, I have just expiated my fault—very completely."

Mme. Charlier entered, and Pierrette slipped away, and returned to Marcelle. After a moment she heard steps in the ante-chamber, then the noise of the door closing, and Mme. Charlier returned.

"A second tempest is coming," thought Pierrette.

But at once she saw that Roger had said nothing of their quarrel.

"The poor Marçay, what a silly!" declared the old lady. "He is very much in love with you, Pierrette, but he has confessed to me that your coldness has discouraged him. What do you take exception to about him, on the whole?"

Pierrette shrugged her shoulders.

"Nothing. He does not please me."

And, determined to forget this absurd adventure, she affected, during he rest of the day, a careless gayety.

But that evening, when she was alone, she quickly perceived that the memories, at first chased away by her, were waiting perfidiously in her little room.

"Oh, Heavens!" thought she, "to think that *he* could have believed that I played the comedy to make him marry me! —to think that, perhaps, for a moment, *he* has believed it!"

And suddenly, abruptly, she commenced to cry.

The experiments made in Vosges had not yielded the hoped-for results, and, scarcely returned to Paris, M. Rémont was eager for work, seeking to penetrate the secret which partly defied him.

Marcelle, very weak, recovered slowly from her influenza, and Mme. Charlier had gone to Normandy with her god-daughter.

Mme. Charlier did not write at all, M. Rémont left his laboratory only for meals, and Pierrette felt very lonely now in the great house.

One Sunday evening, it was nearly eight o'clock, and

Thérèse, disconsolate, had put the soup back on the fire, when the Professor descended from his laboratory.

"You see a happy man, mignonne," said Rémont, seating himself opposite his daughter in the dining-room. "I have at last found an assistant, or rather, a collaborator, by the advertisement which I had placed in the "*Moniteur des Chemistes*," you know. The young man, an old graduate of the Government School for Civil Engineers, if you please, has notified me honestly, that he sought a more important situation, and could only accept temporarily the little employment I offered him; but we have worked all day and already done good work together! He knows my sister, fancy! He is the nephew of Madame Saugé, who—"

Pierrette had been a little startled; but brave in the manner of people who sing when they are afraid, she did not even let her father finish his phrase:

"Ah, I know," she responded, "Mme. Saugé is a friend of Aunt Gertrude's. I have danced with this gentleman at the Prével-Desforges' house."

"His name is Roger Marçay," continued M. Rémont, quietly. "He is a polite boy, very intelligent, very distinguished. A little ashamed to have kept him so late—and on Sunday too!—I begged him to share without ceremony our dinner this evening, but he refused with discretion—fearing to disturb you."

"He did right," approved Pierrette.

After dinner she opened the "*Moniteur des Chemistes*" and sought there, mechanically, the advertisement of which M. Rémont had spoken.

"One would truly say," thought she, "that this gentleman plays the part of a serious man, to prove that I am wrong and that I ought to know it."

At the first moment, however, a little tender joy had stolen into her heart.

"If it should be *for me* that he had resolved to change his life?"

But she at once hardened herself against this weakness.

"For me? Come now! He has seen that his idleness put him in a false position, and his pride has suffered by it. For me! He has not even tried to see me—for which I consider myself very contented moreover!"

M. Rémont seemed to be very sincerely attached to his

young collaborator, of whom he did not cease—with an irritating obstinacy—to extol the merits, the intelligence, the character, the knowledge; but his increasing sympathy was not tainted with selfishness. And it was on the warm recommendation of his new friend that Roger Marçay was able to enter as engineer, under the most favorable circumstances, the house of a great manufacturer of chemical products, M. Louis Maille, with whom Pierrette's father had been on excellent terms for some years.

The position was good from this time on, and as Maille was a judge of men, Marçay could have confidence, great confidence in the future, declared M. Rémont, with a joyous air.

"It is good to be your protégé, my little father," remarked Pierrette.

"Perhaps! But what gratitude the poor boy has shown me, Pierrette," said the good man, without paying attention to the slightly affected tone of the young girl. "He hesitated a moment—and then—he embraced me; fancy!—and so heartily! It is one of those things which please me in him; this spontaneity of a loyal and loving nature. He is extremely young, this engineer of twenty-five years, young as yourself, Pierrette."

Pierrette embraced her father. She found him good, so good that she was touched by it suddenly.

Some days later, M. Rémont, coming in, affected a contrite air.

"Pierrette," said he, "you will scold me—I met Marçay, we talked, and—I really had so many things to explain to him that I have asked him to dinner to-morrow."

A slight flush passed over Pierrette's face.

"Since you have invited him, papa, we will receive him as well as we can."

Mlle. Rémont planned, aided by Thérèse, the menu of a very dainty dinner. She took down from the top of the buffet the white service with gilt bands; she bought flowers to decorate the table, and she kept on her everyday dress, a simple serge which she found out of style.

"M. Marçay will see that we are people who receive properly when we have anything to do with receiving," thought she, slightly biting her lips, "but he will have ascertained likewise that I don't care *that* for him!"

And she snapped her fingers in the air.

But with her beautiful golden locks, which surrounded her head like a true fairy's god-daughter, she nevertheless appeared to be in full dress, and as she had the imprudence to fasten a white carnation in her serge waist, Roger Marçay said at once, on entering,

"How pretty she has made herself!"

He was a little pale, he seemed troubled, or perhaps excited.

Pierrette noticed this at the first words he spoke after having saluted her.

This evening Roger Marçay made the acquaintance of a Pierrette he had not known; a Pierrette who recalled to him only from time to time—by a fleeting sparkle of a glance, by a pouting of the lips, by a little movement of the head—the ravishing Pierrette of the white ball or the naughty Pierrette of Mme. Charlier's house; but a very dignified and very distinguished Pierrette in whom one could not deny the charms and qualities of an accomplished mistress of the house.

However, Roger had not the leisure to talk with this new Pierrette; the evening was devoted to chemistry and to M. Rémont's discoveries. But made entirely happy by the rare and precious joy of escaping from solitary researches, to exchanging ideas and views with a talker capable of hearing him and of responding to him without being indifferent or profane, the professor spoke fully, his voice, his eyes happy. And Pierrette, who was fond of her father, if she only half loved chemistry, underwent momentarily, one could see, an undefinable change in her glance, and her smile—the influence of the gayety and the eager cordiality.

"What a delicious evening!" cried M. Rémont, when Roger came to take leave. "You are a perfect conversationalist, my young friend! I beg you to come to us again soon. Let us see, can we fix a day?"

They were all three standing in M. Rémont's room. Involuntarily Roger's glance sought Pierrette's eyes. This glance said: "You know well, mademoiselle, that I would come again with pleasure, but how could I do so without your permission?"

Pierrette's eyes, blue and pure as a tranquil sheet of water, did not deign to respond to this mute question, but her mouth was less cruel.

"Fix a day, monsieur," she begged, "it gives my father so much pleasure to see you."

Since the moment when Mlle. Rémont had permitted him to "fix a day" Roger Marçay often found himself back in the little apartment in the Rue des Batignolles, and, as much because it is tiresome to sulk, as because she felt herself vaguely bound to smile upon the one who gave her father such good times, Pierrette had departed from her ceremonious manners. The conversations were not always as learned as on the first evening; around the table which Pierrette had decked with flowers, and on the balcony, where, weary after the warm day, they went to seek a little fresh air. As at the Prévels' ball, Mlle. Rémont was obliged to recognize that, between Roger's ideas and her ideas, Roger's sentiments and her sentiments, there was a strange, an astonishing sympathy. Then little by little, without accounting to herself for this unconscious metamorphosis, Pierrette had become again the simple, fresh, ingenuously gay young girl that the black coat had divined at first, and a very sweet comradeship was cemented between the two great enemies.

Nothing could be said of the past; nothing had been said of it. Roger seemed to love his laborious life. M. Maille thought so highly of him that he had spoken of the possibility of a partnership. He received the young man at his home; he had presented him to his wife and daughter—

Then one day, knowing what went on in real life without seeing anything, M. Rémont said, "You know, Pierrette, I truly believe that this brave Marçay will end by marrying Mlle. Maille."

"It was written that M. Marçay should make a good marriage," thought Pierrette. Decidedly people were deceived about the ending of "Cinderella." After catching a glance of the princess the evening of the fête, the king's son had tried to see her again; but he has only found a little girl badly dressed and very countrified, who occupies herself with the household and with painting fans to earn money. Then, deceived, he had forgotten the white dancer to marry a very rich young lady—such was the commonplace conclusion of a story so enticing when beginning.

And Pierrette, more than ever, avoided making herself pretty for M. Marçay. Then she seemed inattentive to his questions, she scorned to smile at him, she affected in his

presence the voice, the tone, the expression of a very indifferent person.

Mlle. Rémont worked hard. The merchants' orders increased; then she had consented to give water-color lessons several times a week. She was often tired. One evening, a dismal, stormy evening, she returned more weary than usual, sad, unnerved. It seemed to her now, disgusting, this life of monotonous work, without the support of ambition, this life, always the same, in which her heart, her imagination felt as though hemmed in, without hope of escape.

She threw her hat and jacket on the bed, and went quickly toward her father's office; but on the threshold she stopped; M. Marçay was there. With a rather bored look he listened to M. Rémont, who spoke to him *sotto voce*. Their conversation had a conventional air.

"Oh, pardon!" said Pierrette, confused.

But her father detained her.

"Wait!" cried he, "I wish to speak to you, mignonne—and to begin with, we will keep monsieur to dinner."

"Very well, papa," acquiesced Pierrette, without any warmth.

"But this is not all," replied M. Rémont. "I am charged, or pretty nearly so, with a most delicate diplomatic mission —I ought to be very expert; to examine Marçay without seeming to—in short, Maille seems to me to be quite disposed to make our friend Roger his son-in-law, and his partner, and the good young man only appears disdainful and objects that he does not know Mlle. Maille, instead of falling on my neck. Make him a little ashamed of his indifference, you who have so many times told me how you loved this charming young girl! Well, reprove him for his consequential airs. I leave him to you while I go to dress myself for dinner."

Pierrette had a great desire to say that M. Marçay's hesitation did not concern her, but she would not, at any price, have anyone suspect that she *personally* dreaded this marriage, and, moreover, before she was able to pronounce a word, she found herself alone with Roger. It was the first time since their famous quarrel.

He seemed waiting for her to speak. She had seemed, for some days, so cold that he might well have some pride in not begging her advice.

"My father is right, monsieur," commenced she, "Mlle.

Maille is one of the most charming young girls that I know. I have given her water-color lessons—she insisted upon this last proposition—and her meetings have enabled me to appreciate in her an excellent heart, a delicate mind, in fact all the qualities that make perfect wives."

Roger regarded her fixedly, a little sternly.

"And so this will be a superb marriage, is it not so?" he interrupted suddenly. "A beautiful marriage this which I seek! Because on the whole, it is to make a good marriage that I have changed my life, that I have become, so humbly, the assistant of M. Rémont, it is to make a good marriage, that, entering the house of M. Maille, I have given myself body and soul to work, that I have promised myself to reach a serious position; sure, brilliant even! And this is how I am rewarded for my efforts, since—"

But, abruptly, he stopped.

"Pierrette," he cried, "my dear little Pierrette, why do you cry?"

Suddenly, while he was speaking, Pierrette had hidden her face in her hands, and commenced to sob, like one hopeless.

"Why do you cry?" repeated Roger, kissing with distracted tenderness the poor hands, wet with tears.

"Because I have given you pain, and because you are horribly wicked—"

The reply seemed incoherent, but Roger was not at all embarrassed, and at once replied with the same logic,

"If I am wicked, my dear, it is because I love you."

Pierrette had regained possession of her hands; she had buried her face in them again.

"And then," continued Roger, "you, also, have been wicked, and much more wicked than I, even; you have ignored me, accused me; you have discouraged me a hundred times—you have made me suffer—"

She did not answer at once, but her eyes smiled again. This idea that she had made Roger suffer seemed to cause her veritable rapture.

"Still," she murmured at last, "you could not swear to me that your aunt had not her designs in begging you to dance with Mlle. Rémont at the Prévels' ball—"

"I will swear it to you so much the less," replied the young man "because I have quite recently made my aunt confess. But what I can tell you, then, is that the excellent lady cares too much for the happy realization of her projects to have said to her nephew that he should make a marriage—and above all, Pierrette, a rich marriage. She knew him, her nephew! She would never have committed such an imprudence—"

Pierrette cast down her eyes, blushing deeply.

"I went then to the Prévels' only with the praiseworthy intention of dancing, for my aunt's pleasure more than mine, with a little provincial who risked, it seemed being neglected, but— but I must confess to you," he continued, "scarcely having entered, I forgot my mission, Mlle. Rémont and my aunt. The young girl whom I loved, mademoiselle—oh, suddenly, at first sight—was no more Mlle. Rémont, the provincial, than Mlle. Rémont, the Parisian; Mlle. Rémont without dowry, than Mlle. Rémont, heiress—was a little Pierrette, all white, who smiled to see herself so pretty and enjoyed herself, a delicious little creature of a dream, who appeared to me in the midst of the crowd and whom I had watched a long time without knowing anything of her, not even her name."

"I am not a little creature of a dream," sighed Pierrette.

"Oh," said Roger, "Now you are yet more for me. You are *you*, and then soon you will be—Pierrette, you will no longer despise me, tell me?"

Gently drawn down, the pretty head, with its golden locks rested, submissive, docile, on Roger's shoulder.

"No," responded Pierrette, very low, "I no longer despise you, I—I esteem you very much."

By this time the eyes said more than the lips.

"Well, Pierrette," cried M. Rémont entering, shod in his slippers, peaceful and calm in his velvet vest, "Have you

been more eloquent than I? This boy disconcerts me. I believed him ambitious—"

"Alas, monsieur," responded the young man, "I am! I am even more so than you believe me. Will you give me the hand of Mademoiselle Pierrette?"

# CARITA: The Story of a Prima Donna, by H. Milton. Illustrations by Marie Latasa and Egbert Cadmus*

BERNARDO CAPOLINI'S wife was still a pretty woman. Those who professed to know said she had been beautiful and that, not many years ago, the world of music went mad over her voice and her charms.

They called her Carita. She was the bread-winner for her little family then, but at the birth of her second child, now a slender girl with great black eyes and a velvety skin, Carita had lost her voice. The girl had a voice, perfect, as her mother's had been, it was thought, but as the mother said:

"Where is the use? I had the dear old master who spared no pains, for he loved me; but I could not look into his kindly eyes, for already I loved Bernardo," and Carita smiled as she tried to remember when she had not loved Bernardo, when they did not love each other.

Carita accepted the verdict of the critics who said that her voice could never fill a house again; and she turned without a murmur to the little home fast filling with cares for her loving heart and toil for her willing hands.

Bernardo had taken up the burden when his wife was forced to lay it down—he was a singer, too—and though he had done what he could, as the neighbors knew, and as the dear little wife often said, he did not reap a golden harvest as she had done. Indeed, it was sometimes little more than bread that Bernardo won for those he loved.

But, he *did* love them, and surely no wife and mother had dearer compensation than had she, Carita thought. True

*Written for Short Stories.

her own beauty was fading, but Bernardo, he was handsome, always the dear lover-husband of her youth!

It mattered little that her hands were hardened with toil, and the beautiful rings she used to wear—she had sold them, when once Bernardo had the cruel fever and could not sing for so long a time that there was no more money left. When

he was well again he kissed her fingers, and said: that, "the little hand was dearer to him than ever before," and now when he was away for so long she sometimes pressed her lips where Bernardo had held his own that day.

But there were bright hopes at last. The great Prima, with whom Bernardo now sang, paid him well and Carita named her in her prayers.

"She must be good," Carita said, though she knew "Bernardo sang like the angels," and to-day he was coming!

Perchance, Carita felt a momentary pang as she stood in the narrow room which, according to her simple means, she had garnished for her husband's coming.

She remembered that she, too, might have been a great artist. Even then there came to her an echo of the applause she used to love. She, too, might have had jeweled bouquets showered at her feet as had this great Prima nightly when she sang. Instead, she had Bernardo, and from the faces of their children his dear eyes looked into her own.

Carita almost pitied the great singer who had "only her voice."

Bernardo will see that she has wasted nothing. She has no bright beads, no gaudy skirt, such as her neighbors wear; though once she loved to array herself in such attire as might enhance her beauty.

She has bought flowers to lay before the little crucifix where she prayed, when a happy girl. She is no less happy now; Carita will not have it otherwise. Why should she, when Bernardo loves her?"

True, the flowers whose sweetness fills the room, were dear—for she bought those that Bernardo loves—and she paid for them the last of the small coins she had hoarded so carefully; but he would fill the little purse once more.

Ah! the cathedral chimes were ringing and they told her the hour. Glowing with happy expectation, Carita flew to make her simple toilet; then she came and stood at the open casement to watch for her husband.

Her hair, wound in heavy braids around her shapely head, shone like the raven's wing in its blackness, and her eyes were like twin stars. The knot of ribbon at her throat was faded she knew, and her dress was poor, but—"Bernardo loves me."

Singing this fond refrain which had so many times brought comfort to her heart, Carita felt her husband's arms around her.

They said truly that Bernardo was "a handsome fellow." His features were as if cut in marble, and his eyes seemed to go to one's heart with their tender looks. He was tall and legant of figure, and upon one hand there glittered a diamond f rare value.

One rapturous moment Carita was held to her husband's heart, then she stood a step away and looked into his eyes, as she said, almost sadly:

"Mine own! Thou art more lovable, always, but *I*, alas! Bernarda—you love me?"

Unconsciously she dropped the tender "thou," and her words took the form of a question, though in the trusting heart of the woman there lived no doubt. Bernardo took her in his arms again and she was happy.

"Dearest," she asked tenderly, "Is it well with thee?"

For reply Bernardo made her hold the apron she wore, a coquettish affair of old ribbons and yellow lace, into which he poured great gold pieces till the delicate fabric parted and the coins rolled upon the floor at her feet.

Carita could not have told why, but the ring of the gold as it fell, jarred upon her heart, and she said:

"Ah! the toil is hard for thee to get so much gold. Thou art silent—the Prima—is she kind?"

"Kinder than I deserve."

Though her eyes were upon his face Carita did not note that, as he thus replied, the blood mounted quickly to Bernardo's olive cheek. She drew him gently towards an inner room where her baby slept.

"Thou hast not seen the little Bernardo. Thou wilt love him, the angel?" she whispered, in excess of happiness.

But, with a gesture as of desperate resolve, her husband drew away from her loving clasp.

"I cannot! I must not!" he exclaimed.

"Must not!" she repeated, wonderingly. "Thy little child!"

Bernardo's reply was incoherent. With her eyes upon his face he could not utter a plausible lie. Carita caught the word "rehearsal," and she exclaimed bitterly.

"She *is* then, hard to take thee away now, and—we have waited so long."

Bernardo turned his face away as he said, "We sing here, to-night only."

"And thou?" she questioned with lips that paled as she spoke.

"Carita, *mia*," he cried, throwing his arms around her again and kissing her lips. "Thou hast been so dear to me!"

Ere the amazed wife could speak, Bernardo was gone, and

she stood as if smitten while she repeated his words, "Hast been so dear—hast been dear—to him!"

Was she, then, no longer dear to her husband? Would the sun shine to-morrow? Surely nature herself might be no longer true. Seed time and harvest might fail now, and the grapes might never be purple again in the vineyards, on the sunny slopes of the hills.

A grand carriage drew up before her door and a woman alighted therefrom. She entered the house, but her arrival seemed to have no significance for Carita's dulled senses till the intruder came and stood beside her. Then Carita raised her trembling hands, as if to shield her heart from the final blow and she cried passionately.

"Why, oh, why! do you come to me?"

The great Prima, for it was she, had never played in a scene like unto this. Regal in robes whose richness swept the floor among the scattered gold, standing before this woman, in whose heart she was about to lay all that life and love hold dear; she forgot the well-turned phrases she had conned that she might soften the blow, and, in words that she had never thought to say, she made her errand known.

"Bernardo! *You?*" gasped the stricken wife, while her slender brown fingers clutched at the poor faded ribbon at her throat.

Alas! she was so fair, this woman who stood before her, her flower-like face, pale in its frame of clustering gold and in whose silvery voice Carita's heart read its death knell.

The woman would have spoken, but Carita cried, imperiously, "Nay, I will not hear your voice, for it has slain my soul!"

Again the singer essayed to speak, but the wretched wife cried, desperately:

"Do not! or I shall strike you to my feet. I, too, was a singer; but I loved Bernardo, and I am forgotten. I had the thought but an hour ago, of what I might have been; but it was all as nothing, the music, the flowers, the applause—for Bernardo loved me. If he wills this, it shall be. If I cannot —I shall lie dead at your door."

There was silence in the room for a moment, then Carita, seeming to forget the presence of the woman, cried in tones of anguish:

"My babes! alas, my little ones!"

Then the singer spoke eagerly, "They shall have——"

"Your gold?" cried the frenzied wife. "Mother Mary! Go!"

Carita lay as one dead where she fell when her visitor departed. The cry of her babe aroused her at last, and with the little one upon her breast, the horror of it all was even more fully realized.

It was a gala night in the city and the hearts of the people were glad over the great Prima who was to sing for them. Suddenly Carita's resolution was taken. She must hear this beautiful woman and her husband, for they were to sing together.

"I will go!" she cried, "I must see him once more—and, I shall know—my heart will tell."

With trembling eagerness she made ready. She gave her babe a harmless sleeping potion, then, after a few artistic touches, she stood transformed into a coquettish lady's maid. Taking one of the gold pieces which, like basalisk eyes, gleamed upon her from the floor, Carita said, "For this, I will take one of these."

With the gold she bought at the nearest flower stand a bouquet, such as a lover would choose for his mistress, then she hastened with it to the box entrance at the Opera House.

"For," said she ,"there are so many people I cannot come near the stage—I must enter here."

Carita knew well who should fill the boxes on such a night, and to the guard, who stood at the entrance, she said, "Let me enter—I must see her English ladyship in the box nearest the stage."

"Nay, my pretty one. It is her Russian ladyship who is there to-night," the guard replied.

"But she is within, my mistress, in the next box, perchance, persisted Carita. "The m'sieu said she must have the flowers at once. She will never forgive me, alas!"

"But my orders, my dear," the guard protested faintly.

Then Carita smiled, she who had never given a glance, even, save to her husband, and, as she looked into the face of the guard, she whispered persuasively:

"He loves her so, the m'sieu! Let me take the flowers."

They stood in the shadow of the portal. The guard stooped, and snatched a kiss from her lips, then he drew aside for her to pass.

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

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[illegible]

Then, but for the support of a chair upon which she leaned, in this moment of her supreme anguish, Carma must have fallen to the floor.

How the people cheered! Again and again were the singers recalled, and always Bernardo held the fair jeweled hand in his own, as bowing and smiling they acknowledged the oft renewed applause.

Would that her own locks were golden, and that her eyes were heavenly blue, then perchance, Bernardo might have loved her always.

"Would they cheer so, if they knew?" Carita asked herself as she stood with her eyes bent upon her husband's face.

She was little aware that the story of a romance behind the scenes had reached the people, and that it added zest to the demonstration.

At last the curtain fell and with a despairing cry Carita fled to the street.

Her cry reached Bernardo's ears, and he knew it was the utterance of a broken heart; but the beautiful woman, whose hand was upon his arm, had not heard; and when his eyes sought her own she felt that her triumphs were, indeed, complete.

Carita did not pause till she reached her home, and the room that, only a few hours ago she had made bright, for his coming. Was it but a few hours, or had years passed since she stood at the window watching for him?

Were she to go to her little mirror now, would it show her a face, old and wrinkled, like the face of Mother Bettina, who sold fruit on the next corner? It could never again show her the happy lines it had held, when last she looked into it, singing for very joy that he was coming.

The fragrance of the flowers that she had bought, because Bernardo loved them, was maddening. She tore the frail blossoms away and trampled them under her feet.

"Great Heaven! must she live?"

But amid the storm of anguish that swept over her soul she heard the cry of her little child and the mother heart asserted itself. She remembered with a pang that her children had tasted no food, since in the misplaced trust of her loving heart she had waited his coming.

Bernardo had not filled the little purse, and for her children, she could not touch the gold pieces lying there. The kind old man, who had often let her choose from his wares when she had no money—but Bernardo had paid him always—he was asleep, long since.

There was a glittering place nearby, a garden where women and men ate and drank all the night long. Carita hastened thither, and though she assured them wildly that she could "never pay them, never!" and, that she asked "only for a little bread," they filled her hands with the daintiest viands the place afforded, and the kind-hearted proprietor, who

ordered it thus, followed her with compassionate eyes, as he said gently:

"Poor Carita."

She found her home, though there was a cruel mist before her eyes, and familiar places looked far off and strange. Once there, she saw her children feasting upon the food she had brought, then sank upon her knees before the little crucifix where the sweet flowers had been, but she could not pray.

There was a strange blending of sight and sound, and her

anguish seemed as a dream that was forgotten; for she was with him again, amid sweet flowers and singing birds; and again that dear refrain, "Bernardo loves me" was upon her lips.

In the morning when her kind neighbors came to know why Carita was not singing, as was her wont—for the sun was shining and they knew Bernardo came yesterday—they found her delirious. The gold pieces were upon the floor and the air was faint with the odor of the crushed flowers.

There had been "a history," they said pityingly, as they

gathered up the gold and swept the flowers away, and they noted that Bernardo came no more.

In a quiet little hamlet on a green, mountain slope, there stands a little church where at vespers a voice of wondrous melody is heard, and tears fill the eyes of the old master, for it is the sweetest voice in the world to him.

He came to Carita and cared for her and her children in her grief and desolation; then he persuaded her to try her voice again. It was for her children's sake, he urged, and success had crowned her efforts, but she would sing only in the little church. "For," said she, "the world is cruel, but it will not seek us here."

Costly gifts came for Carita and for her children, but they were rejected. Once she signed a paper that an advocate brought. He was a man of kindly speech, and he seemed to feel for her grief. She begged him to spare her the reading of those cruel words. Her husband wished it—he should be free.

Then a letter came from a far distant city. It begged her to accept a munificent provision that was being made for her and her children. Carita read no more, though there were still several pages. She severed the letter in twain.

"By this he will know that we are divided, indeed!" she said.

The master always at hand to help her or to spare her pain took the letter and returned it whence it came.

He has another pupil now, Carita's slender girl with eyes like her mother's, and whose voice gave promise, the neighbors thought. The master allows her to sing in public but seldom, and he refuses all proffered engagements for her.

"We will wait," he says.

The great Prima, who has won her honors for more years

than she likes to remember, came one night when the youthful singer was to be heard.

All eyes were turned towards the acknowledged Queen of Song, when, with her husband, she entered her box; but she had eyes only for the girlish form upon the stage, ears only for her voice.

When the curtain fell amid such applause as she had deemed her own especial right, she said:

"Her day is at hand. I shall be forgotten."

Her voice was tremulous and in her beautiful eyes there were tears; but her husband could not comfort her. A Nemesis had arisen, for in the exquisite face and appealing eyes of the sweet singer before them Bernardo Capelina beheld again the forsaken wife of his youth.

An old man in the next box, who seemed to have breathed only with the singer, leaned forward and said:

"Yes! and we call her 'Carita.'"

# HE Tragedy of a Mate at Chess: A Tale of the East, by T. W. McKail *

HIS Highness, the Rajah of Baghadur, was known far and wide in the Peninsula as the best native chess-player in India, and there was a certain tea-planting American in the north who had won the Calcutta tournament thrice. It was fated, therefore, that the two champions should meet across the checkered board.

South came the tea-planter, at the bidding of a perfumed letter written in Persian and carried in a box of fretted gold. He traveled South alone, a mere undistinguished commercial wayfarer, a little looked down on by the Collector and the Major who rode in the same train. But the Major and the Collector stared when they saw him descend at the appointed railway station, for there awaited him not only the retinue of a Rajah, but His Highness, the Rajah, himself. The tea-planter said it was too much honor, but His Highness remarked that he could not sufficiently honor "a prince of the game of games."

For thirty miles of vale and plateau they drove together in a landau, the potentate and the planter lounging side by side and talking of the game. A hundred barbaric horsemen escorted them and a hundred gorgeous infantry saluted them as they drove into the compound through the great palace gateway. And that night the tea-planter began a letter to a doctor's sister in New York, in which he wrote of "the regular royal reception, dear, that I've had."

Three games at chess they played, the Rajah and the tea-planter, after a day of feasting and a day of rest. They played a game a day. The squares of the board were of ebony and silver, and the chessmen of solid gold. The first

*Written for Short Stories.

game lasted two hours, the second three, and the last game five by the clock.

The tea-planter won the first game, and the Rajah's manner grew less silky. On the second day His Highness got the game, and the American said: "I'm glad you've won, sir," at which the Rajah's brow grew black. The tea-planter saw him no more that day, but Khazi Futteh Khan, chief minister of Baghadur, sat long with the honored guest in the divan and smoked for a silent hour, and then spoke:

"My lord the Rajah is king of the game of games," spoke Khazi Futteh Khan. "It is his royal whim to pit himself against all famous players. Never yet hath His Highness been vanquished; that is his dearest pride. It were ill that in the winning game my lord the American should put His Highness to shame. Always His Highness richly rewardeth the vanquished." But the tea-planter did not understand.

For the winning bout of the rubber the board was spread in the shade of geranium trees, within the secret inner garden of the Zenana, and many dark eyes behind gilded lattice-work saw the game unseen. It was a mighty struggle; never had the tea-planter so keenly enjoyed the fray, for he did not understand. "Check!" he cried, gleefully, at the end of the fourth hour of contest. The Rajah rose, scowling, and passed behind the gilded lattices; the dark eyes turned to comfort him and peeped no more.

" 'Twere ill that my lord the Rajah should be vanquished; let my lord the American move *thus* and *thus*, and all shall yet be well," said Khazi Futteh Khan. But the tea-planter was poring over the board and did not understand.

"I s'pose he's coming out again soon, isn't he?" said the American presently, getting up from his cushions and walking about to stretch his legs. "Because, you know, it's mate in six moves."

The chief minister of Baghadur shrugged his shoulders and fingered the hilt of his sword.

In a little while they brought from the Zenana sweet dates and ripe fruits, and drugged tobacco and potent wine. The American ate, smoked and drank, unaffected, and pored over the waiting board. Then His Highness emerged from the gilded lattice-work and the game went on.

The tea-planter played the first of his six inevitable moves. As he lifted the piece for his second, a soft touch fell on his

left hand. He turned his head abstractedly and saw that a slave girl, young, lissom, beautiful, had stolen to his side. She looked at him with soft, inviting gaze. But he did not understand.

He lifted a pawn for his third move, and as he placed it within the destined square, a tray of flashing jewels and great gold coins was set down at his right hand. "Behold the reward of the loser," whispered Khazi Futteh Khan; but the tea-planter did not understand.

He lifted the piece for his fourth move, and the Rajah gave an angry stir. The board was shaken and the pieces fell among the cushions. But the tea-planter, as if nothing had happened, replaced them, so that the game might go on.

Again he played his piece, and as he did so the shadow of a lifted sword fell over his bent head across the board. But his eyes were intent on the game, and if he saw the shadow he did not understand.

He lifted his rook for the winning move, and the keen blade cut, thin and burning, right through his outstretched neck. But the sword of Khazi Futteh Khan fell half a moment late: "*Mate*," whispered the falling head.

# A FEUD in the Five Towns: A Story and an Epilogue, by C. A. Bennett*

WHEN Clive Timmis paused at the side-door of Ezra Brunt's great shop in Machin Street, and the door was opened to him by Ezra Brunt's daughter before he had had time to pull the bell, not only all Machin Street knew it within the hour, but also most persons of consequence left in Hanbridge on a Thursday afternoon—Thursday being early-closing day. For Hanbridge, though it counts sixty thousand inhabitants and is the chief of the Five Towns—that vast, huddled congeries of boroughs devoted to the manufacture of earthenware—is a place where the art of attending to other people's business still flourishes in rustic perfection.

Ezra Brunt's drapery establishment was the foremost retail house, in any branch of trade, of the Five Towns. It had no rival nearer than Manchester, thirty-six miles off; and even Manchester could exhibit nothing conspicuously superior to it. The most acutely critical shoppers of the Five Towns, women who were in the habit of coming to London every year for the January sales, spoke of Brunt's as a "right-down good shop." And the husbands of these ladies, manufacturers who employed from two hundred to a thousand men, regarded Ezra Brunt as a commercial magnate of equal importance with themselves. Brunt, who had served his apprenticeship at Birmingham, started business in Machin Street in 1862, when Hanbridge was half its present size and all the best shops of the district were in Oldcastle, an ancient burg contiguous with, but holding itself proudly aloof from, the industrial Five Towns. He paid eighty pounds a year rent, and lived over the shop, and in the summer quarter his gas bill was always under a sover-

*From the Cornhill Magazine.

eign. For ten years success tarried, but in 1872 his daughter Eva was born and his wife died, and from that moment the sun of his prosperity climbed higher and higher into heaven. He had been profoundly attached to his wife, and, having lost her, he abandoned himself to the mercantile struggle with that morose and terrible ferocity which was the root of his character. Of rude, gaunt aspect, gruffly taciturn by nature, and variable in temper, he yet had the precious instinct for soothing customers. To this day he can surpass his own shop-walkers in the admirable and tender solicitude with which, forsaking dialect, he drops into a lady's ear his famous stereotyped phrase: "Are you receiving proper attention, Madam?" From the first he eschewed the facile trickeries and ostentations which allure the populace. He sought a high-class trade, and, by waiting, he found it. He would never advertise on hoardings; for many years he had no signboard over his shop-front; and whereas the name of "Bostocks," the huge cheap draper's lower down Machin Street on the opposite side, attracts you at every railway station and in every tramcar, the name of "E. Brunt" is to be seen only in a modest regular advertisement on the front page of the Staffordshire Signal. Repose, reticence, respectability: it was these attributes which he decided his shop should possess, and by means of which he succeeded. To enter Brunt's, with its silently swinging doors, its broad, easy staircases, its long floors covered with warm, red linoleum, its partitioned walls, its smooth mahogany counters, its unobtrusive mirrors, its rows of youths and virgins in black, and its pervading atmosphere of quietude and discretion, was like entering a temple before the act of oblation has commenced. You were conscious of some supreme administrative influence everywhere imposing itself. That influence was Ezra Brunt. And yet the man differed utterly from the thing he had created. His was one of those dark and passionate souls which smolder in this harsh midland district as slag-heaps smolder on the pit-banks, revealing their strange fires only in the darkness.

In 1899, Brunt's establishment occupied four shops, Nos. 52, 56, 58 and 60, in Machin Street. He had bought the freeholds at a price which timid people regarded as exorbitant, but the solicitors of Hanbridge secretly applauded his enterprise and shrewdness in anticipating the enormous rise in ground-values which has now been in rapid, steady progress there for more than

a decade. He had thrown the interiors together and built the frontages in handsome freestone. He had also purchased several shops opposite, and rumor said that it was his intention to offer these latter to the Town Council at a low figure if the Council would cut a new street leading from his premises to the Market Square. Such a scheme would have met with general approval. But there was one serious hiatus in the plans of Ezra Brunt—to wit, No. 54 Machin Street. No. 54, separating 52 and 56, was a chemist's shop, shabby, but sedate as to appearance, owned and occupied by George Christopher Timmis, a mild and venerable citizen, and a local preacher in the Wesleyan Methodist Connection. For nearly thirty years Brunt had coveted Mr. Timmis's shop; more than twenty years have elapsed since he first opened negotiations for it. Mr. Timmis was by no means eager to sell—indeed his attitude was distinctly a repellant one—but a bargain would undoubtedly have been concluded had not a report reached the ears of Mr. Timmis to the effect that Ezra Brunt had remarked at the "Turk's Head" that "th' old leech was only sticking out for every brass farthing he could get." The report was untrue, but Mr. Timmis believed it, and from that moment Ezra Brunt's chances of obtaining the chemist's shop vanished completely. His lawyer expended diplomacy in vain, raising the offer week by week till the incredible sum of three thousand pounds was reached. Then Ezra Brunt himself saw Mr. Timmis, and without a word of prelude said: "Will ye take three thousand guineas for this bit o' property?" "Not thirty thousand guineas," said Mr. Timmis, quietly; the stern pride of the benevolent old local preacher had been aroused. "Then, be damned to you!" said Ezra Brunt, who had never been known to swear before. Thenceforth a feud existed, not less bitter because it was a feud in which nothing was said and nothing done—a silent and implacable mutual resistance. The sole outward sign of it was the dirty and stumpy brown-brick shop-front of Mr. Timmis, squeezed in between those massive luxurious façades of stone which Ezra Brunt soon afterward erected. The pharmaceutical business of Mr. Timmis was not a very large one, and, fiscally, Ezra Brunt could have swallowed him at a meal and suffered no inconvenience; but in that the aged chemist had lived on just half his small income for some fifty years past, his position was impregnable. Hanbridge smiled

cynically at this *impasse* produced by an idle word, and recognizing the equality of the antagonists, leaned neither to one side nor to the other. At intervals, however, the legend of the feud was embroidered with new and effective detail in the mouth of some inventive gossip, and by degrees it took high place among those piquant social histories which illustrate the real life of a town, and which parents recount to their children with such zest in moods of reminiscence.

When George Christopher Timmis buried his wife, Ezra Brunt, as a near neighbor, was asked to the funeral. "The *cortège* will move at half-past one," ran the printed invitation, and at 1.15 Brunt's carriage was decorously in place behind the hearse and the two mourning coaches. The demeanor of the chemist and the draper toward each other was a sublime answer to the demands of the occasion; some people even said that the breach had been healed; but these were not of the discerning.

The most active person at the funeral was the chemist's only nephew, Clive Timmis, partner in a small but prosperous firm of majolica manufacturers at Bursley. Clive, who was seldom seen in Hanbridge, made a favorable impression on everyone by his pleasing, unaffected manner, and his air of discretion and success. He was a bachelor of thirty-two, and lived in lodgings at Bursley. On the return of the funeral party from the cemetery, Clive Timmis found Brunt's daughter Eva in his uncle's house. Uninvited, she had left her place in the private room at her father's shop in order to assist Timmis's servant Sarah in the preparation of that solid and solemn repast which must inevitably follow every proper interment in the Five Towns. Without false modesty she introduced herself to one or two of the men who had surprised her at her work, and then quietly departed just as they were sitting down to table and Sarah had brought in the hot tea-cakes. Clive Timmis saw her only for a moment, but from that moment she was his one thought. During the evening, which he spent alone with his uncle, he behaved in every particular as a nephew should, yet he was acting a part; his real self roved after Ezra Brunt's daughter, wherever she might be. Clive had never fallen in love, though several times in his life he had tried hard to do so. He had long wished to marry—wished ardently; he had even got into the way of regarding every woman he met, and he met many, in the light of a possible

partner. "Can it be *she?*" he had asked himself a thousand times, and then answered half sadly "No." Not one woman had touched his imagination, coincided with his dream. It is strange that after seeing Eva Brunt he forgot thus to interrogate himself. For a fortnight, while he went his ways as usual, her image occupied his heart, throwing that once orderly chamber into the wildest confusion; and he let it remain, dimly aware of some delicious danger. He inspected the image every night before he slept, and every morning when he awoke, and made no effort to define its distracting charm; he knew only that Eva Brunt was absolutely and in every detail unlike all other women. On the second Sunday he murmured during the sermon: "But I only saw her for a minute." A few days afterwards, he took the tram to Hanbridge.

"Uncle," he said, "how should you like me to come and live here with you? I've been thinking things out a bit, and I thought perhaps you'd like it. I expect you must feel rather lonely now."

The neat, fragrant shop was empty, and the two men stood behind the big glass-fronted case of Burroughs and Wellcome's preparations. Clive's venerable uncle happened to be looking into a drawer marked "Gentianæ Rad. Pulv." He closed the drawer with slow hesitation, and then, stroking his long white beard, replied in that deliberate voice which seemed always to tremble with religious fervor, "The hand of the Lord is in this thing, Clive. I have wished that you might come to live here with me. But I was afraid it would be too far from the works."

"Pooh! That's nothing," said Clive.

As he lingered at the shop door for the Bursley car to pass the end of Machin Street, Eva Brunt went by. He raised his hat with diffidence, and she smiled. It was a marvellous chance. His heart leapt into a throb which was half agony and half delight. "I am in love," he said gravely. He had just discovered the fact, and the discovery filled him with exquisite apprehension.

If he had waited till the age of thirty-two for that spring-time of the soul which we call love, Clive had not waited for nothing. Eva was a woman to enravish the heart of the man whose imagination could pierce the agitating secrets immured in that calm and silent bosom. Slender and scarcely tall,

she belonged to the order of spare, slight-made women, who hide within their slim frames an endowment of profound passion far exceeding that of their more voluptuously formed sisters; who never coarsen into stoutness; and who at forty are as disturbing as at twenty. At this date Eva was twenty-six. She had a rather small, white face, which was a mask to the casual observer, and the very mirror of her feelings to anyone with eyes to read its signs. "I tell you what you are like," said Clive to her once; "you are like a fine race horse, always on the quiver." Yet many people considered her cold and impassive. Her walk and bearing showed a sensitive independence, and when she spoke it was usually in tones of command. The girls in the shop, where she was a power second only to Ezra Brunt, were a little afraid of her, chiefly because she poured terrible scorn on their small affectations, jealousies, and vendettas. But they liked her because, in their own phrase, "there was no nonsense about" this redoubtable woman. She hated shams and make-believes with a bitter and ruthless hatred. She was the heiress to at least five thousand a year, and knew it well, but she never encouraged her father to complicate their simple mode of life with the pomps of wealth. They lived in a house with a large garden at Pireford, which is on the summit of the steep ridge between the Five Towns and Oldcastle, and they kept two servants and a coachman, who was also gardener. Eva paid the servants good wages and took care to get good value therefor. "It's not often I have any bother with my servants," she would say, "for they know that if there is any trouble I would just as soon clear them out and put on an apron and do the work myself." She was an accomplished house-mistress, and could bake her own bread; in towns not one woman in a thousand can bake. With the coachman she had little to do, for she could not rid herself of a sentimental objection to the carriage; it savored of "airs"; when she used it as she might use a tramcar. It was her custom, every day except Saturday, to walk to the shop about eleven o'clock, after her house had been set in order. She had been thoroughly trained in the business, and had spent a year at a first-rate shop in High Street, Kensington. Millinery was her specialty, and she still watched over that department with a particular attention, but for some time past she had risen beyond the limitations of departments, and assisted her father in the

general management of the vast concern. In commercial aptitude she resembled the typical Frenchwoman. Although he was her father, Ezra Brunt had the wit to recognize her talents, and he always listened to her suggestions, which, however, sometimes startled him. One of them was that he should import into the Five Towns a *modiste* from Paris, offering a salary of two hundred a year. The old provincial stood aghast! He had the idea that all Parisian women were stage-dancers. And to pay four pounds a week to a female! Nevertheless Mademoiselle Bertot, styled in the shop "Madame," now presides over Ezra Brunt's dressmakers, draws her four pounds a week (of which she saves two), and by mere nationality has given a unique distinction and success to her branch of the business. Eva occupied a small room opening off the principal showroom, and during hours of work she issued thence but seldom. Only customers of the highest importance might speak with her. She was a power felt rather than seen. Employees who knocked at her door always did so with a certain awe of what awaited them on the other side, and a consciousness that the moment was unsuitable for levity. "If you please, Miss Eva—" Here she gave audience to the "buyers" and window-dressers, listened to complaints and excuses, and occasionally had a secret orgy of afternoon tea with one or two of her friends. None but these few girls, mostly younger than herself and remarkable only in that their dislike of the snobbery of the Five Towns, though less fiercely displayed, agreed with her own, really knew Eva. To them alone did she unveil herself, and by them she was idolized. "She is simply splendid when you know her—such a jolly girl!" they would say to other people, but other people, especially other women, could not believe it. They fearfully respected her because she was very well dressed, and had quantities of money. But they called her "a curious creature"; it was inconceivable to them that she should choose to work in a shop; and her tongue had a causticity which was sometimes exceedingly disconcerting and mortifying. As for men, she was shy of them, and moreover, she loathed the elaborate and insincere ritual of deference which the average man practises towards women unrelated to him, particularly when they are young and rich. Her father she adored, without knowing it; for he often angered her, and humiliated her

in private. As for the rest, she was after all only six-and-twenty.

"If you don't mind, I should like to walk along with you," Clive Timmis said to her one Sunday evening in the porch of the Bethesda Chapel.

"I shall be glad," she answered at once, "Father isn't here and I'm all alone." Ezra Brunt was indeed seldom there, counting, in the matter of attendance at chapel, among what were called "the weaker brethren."

"I am going over to Oldcastle," Clive explained calmly.

So began the formal courtship—more than a month after Clive had settled in Machin Street, for he was far too discreet to engender, by precipitancy, any suspicion in the haunts of scandal that his true reason for establishing himself in his uncle's household was a certain rich young woman who was to be found every day next door. Guided as much by instinct as by tact, Clive approached Eva with an almost savage simplicity and naturalness of manner, ignoring not only her father's wealth, but all the feigned punctilio of a wooer. His face said: "Let there be no beating about the bush; I like you." Hers answered, "Good! We will see." From the first he pleased her, and not least in treating her exactly as she would have wished to be treated, namely, as a quite plain person of that part of the middle class which is neither upper nor lower. Few men in the Five Towns would have been capable of forgetting Ezra Brunt's income in talking to Ezra Brunt's daughter. Fortunately Timmis had a proud, confident spirit, the spirit of one who unaided has wrested success from the world's death-like clutch. Had Eva the reversion of fifty thousand a year instead of five, he, Clive, was still a prosperous plain man, well able to support a wife in the position to which God had called him. Their walks together grew more and more frequent, and they became intimate, exchanging ideas and rejoicing openly at the similarity of those ideas. Although there was no concealment in these encounters, still there was a circumspection which resembled the clandestine. By a silent understanding Clive did not enter the house at Pireford; to have done so would have excited remark, for this house, unlike some, had never been the *rendezvous* of young men; much less, therefore, did he invade the shop. No! The chief part of their lovemaking (for such it was, though the term would have roused Eva's

contemptuous anger) occurred in the streets; in this they did but follow the traditions of their class. Thus the idyll, so matter-of-fact upon the surface, but within which glowed secret and adorable fires, progressed towards its culmination. Eva, the artless fool—oh, how simple are the wisest at times! —thought that the affair was hid from the shop. But was it possible? Was it possible that in those tiny bedrooms on the third floor, where the evening heavy hours were ever lightened with breathless interminable recitals of what some "he" had said and some "she" had replied, such an enthralling episode should escape discovery? The dormitories knew of Eva's "attachment" before Eva herself. Yet none knew how it was known. The whisper arose like Venus from a sea of trivial gossip, miraculously, exquisitely. On the night when the first rumor of it traversed the passages there was scarcely any sleep at Brunt's, while Eva up at Pireford slumbered as a young girl.

On the Thursday afternoon with which we began, Brunt's was deserted save for the housekeeper, and Eva, who was writing letters in her room.

"I saw you from my window, coming up the street," she said to Clive, "and so I ran down to open the door. Will you come into father's room? He is in Manchester for the day, buying."

"I knew that," said Timmis.

"How did you know?" She observed that his manner was somewhat nervous and constrained.

"You yourself told me last night—don't you remember?"

"So I did."

"That's why I sent the note round this morning to say I'd call this afternoon. You got it, I suppose?"

She nodded thoughtfully. "Well, what is this business you want to talk about?"

It was spoken with a brave carelessness, but he caught the tremor in her voice, and saw her little hand shake as it lay on the table amid her father's papers. Without knowing why he should do so, he stepped hastily forward and seized that hand. Her emotion unmanned him. He thought he was going to cry; he could not account for himself.

"Eva," he said thickly, "you know what the business is; you know, don't you?"

She smiled. That smile, the softness of her hand, the

sparkle in her eye, the heave of her small bosom—it was the divinest miracle! Clive, manufacturer of majolica, went hot and then cold, and then his wits were suddenly his own again.

"That's all right," he murmured, and sighed, and placed on Eva's lips the first kiss that had ever lain there.

"Dear boy," she said later, "you should have come up to Pireford, not here, and when father was there."

"Should I?" he answered happily. "It just occurred to me all of a sudden this morning that you would be here, and that I couldn't wait."

"You will come up to-night and see father?"

"I had meant to."

"You had better go home now."

"Had I?"

She nodded, putting her lips tightly together—a trick of hers.

"Come up about half-past eight."

"Good! I will let myself out."

He left her and she gazed dreamily at the window, which looked on to a whitewashed yard. The next moment someone else entered the room with heavy footsteps. She turned round a little startled.

It was her father.

"Why! You *are* back early, father! How—" She stopped. Something in the old man's glance gave her a premonition of disaster. To this day she does not know what accident brought him from Manchester two hours sooner than usual, and to Machin Street instead of Pireford.

"Has young Timmis been here?" he inquired curtly.

"Yes."

"Ha!" with subdued sinister satisfaction, "I saw him going out. He didna' see me." Ezra Brunt deposited his hat and sat down.

Intimate with all her father's various moods, she saw instantly and with terrible certainty that a series of chances had fatally combined themselves against her. If only she had not happened to tell Clive that her father would be at Manchester this day! If only her father had adhered to his customary hour of return! If only Clive had had the sense to make his proposal openly at Pireford some evening! If only he had left a little earlier! If only her father had not

caught him going out by the side door on a Thursday afternoon when the place was empty! Here, she guessed, was the suggestion of furtiveness which had raised her father's unreasoning anger, often fierce, and always incalculable.

"Clive Timmis has asked me to marry him, father."

"Has he!"

"Surely you must have known, father, that he and I were seeing each other a great deal."

"Not from your lips, my girl."

"Well, father—" Again she stopped, this strong and capable woman, gifted with a fine brain to organize, and a powerful will to command She quailed, robbed of speech, before the causeless, vindictive, and infantile wrath of an old man who happened to be in a bad temper. She actually felt like a naughty schoolgirl before him. Such is the tremendous influence of life-long habit, the irresistible power of the *patria potestas* when it has never been relaxed. Ezra Brunt saw in front of him only a cowering child.

"Clive is coming up to see you to-night," she went on timidly, clearing her throat.

"Humph! Is he?"

The rosy and tender dream of five minutes ago lay in fragments at Eva's feet. She brooded with stricken apprehension upon the forms of obstruction which his despotism might choose.

The next morning Clive and his uncle breakfasted together as usual in the parlor behind the chemist's shop.

"Uncle," said Clive brusquely, when the meal was nearly finished, "I'd better tell you that I've proposed to Eva Brunt."

Old George Timmis lowered the Manchester Guardian and gazed at Clive over his steel-rimmed spectacles.

"She is a good girl," he remarked, "she will make you a good wife. Have you spoken to her father?"

"That's the point. I saw him last night, and I'll tell you what he said. These were his words: 'You can marry my daughter, Mr. Timmis, when your uncle agrees to part with his shop!'"

"That I shall never do, nephew," said the aged patriarch quietly and deliberately.

"Of course you won't, uncle. I shouldn't think of suggest-

ing it. I'm merely telling you what he said." Clive laughed harshly. "Why," he added, "the man must be mad!"

"What did the young woman say to that?" his uncle inquired.

Clive frowned. "I didn't see her last night," he said. "I didn't ask to see her. I was too angry."

Just then the post arrived, and there was a letter for Clive, which he read and put carefully in his waistcoat pocket.

"Eva writes asking me to go to Pireford to-night," he said, after a pause. "I'll soon settle it, depend on that. If Ezra Brunt refuses his consent, so much the worse for him. I wonder whether he actually imagines that a grown man and a grown woman are to be—Ah, well! I can't talk about it. It's too silly. I'll be off to the works."

When Clive reached Pireford that night, Eva herself opened the door to him. She was wearing a gray frock, and over it a large white apron, perfectly plain.

"My girls are both out to-night," she said, "and I was making some puffs for the sewing-meeting tea. Come into the breakfast-room—this way," she added, guiding him. He had entered the house on the previous night for the first time. She spoke hurriedly, and, instead of stopping in the breakfast-room, wandered uncertainly through it into the greenhouse, to which it gave access by means of a French window. In the dark, confined space, amid the close-packed blossoms, they stood together. She bent down to smell at a musk-plant. He took her hand and drew her soft and yielding form toward him and kissed her warm face.

"Oh, Clive!" she said. "Whatever are we to do?"

"Do?" he replied, enchanted by her instinctive feminine surrender and reliance upon him, which seemed the more precious in that creature so proud and reserved to all others. "Do! Where is your father?"

"Reading the Signal in the dining-room."

Every business man in the Five Towns reads the Staffordshire Signal from beginning to end every night.

"I will see him. Of course, he is your father; but I will just tell him—as decently as I can—that neither you nor I will stand this nonsense."

"You mustn't—you mustn't see him."

"Why not?"

"It will only lead to unpleasantness."

"That can't be helped."

"He never, never changes when once he has *said* a thing. I know him."

Clive was arrested by something in her tone, something new to him, that in its poignant finality seemed to have caught up and expressed in a single instant that bitterness of a lifetime's renunciation which falls to the lot of most women.

"Will you come outside?" he asked, in a different voice. Without replying she led the way down the long garden, which ended in an ivy-grown brick wall and a panorama of the immense valley of industries below. It was a warm, cloudy evening. The last silver tinge of an August twilight lay on the shoulder of the hill to the left. There was no moon, but the splendid watch-fires of labor flamed from ore-heap and furnace across the whole expanse, performing their nightly miracle of beauty. Trains crept with noiseless mystery along the middle distance, under their canopies of yellow steam. Further off the far-extending streets of Hanbridge made a map of starry lines on the blackness. To the southeast stared the cold, blue electric lights of Knype railway station. All was silent, save for a distant thunderous roar, the giant breathing of the forge at Shirley Bar Ironworks.

Eva leaned both elbows on the wall and looked forth.

"Do you mean to say," said Clive, "that Mr. Brunt will actually stick by what he has said?"

"Like grim death," said Eva.

"But what's his idea?"

"Oh! How can I tell you?" she burst out passionately. "Perhaps I did wrong. Perhaps I ought to have warned him earlier—said to him 'Father, Clive Timmis is courting me!' Ugh! He cannot bear to be surprised about anything. But yet he must have known—It was all an accident, Clive, all an accident. He saw you leaving the shop yesterday. He would say he *caught* you leaving the shop—*sneaking* off like—"

"But Eva—"

"I know, I know! Don't tell me! But it was that, I am sure. He would resent the mere look of things, and then he would think and think, and the notion of your uncle's shop would occur to him again, after all these years. I can see his thoughts as plain—! My dear, if he had not seen you at Machin Street yesterday, or if you had seen him and spoken

to him, all might have gone right. He would have objected, but he would have given way in a day or two. Now he will never give way. I asked you just now what was to be done; but I knew all the time that there was nothing."

"There is one thing to be done, Eva, and the sooner the better."

"Do you mean that old Mr. Timmis must give up his shop to my father? Never! Never!"

"I mean," said Clive quietly, "that we must marry without your father's consent."

She shook her head slowly and sadly, relapsing into calmness.

"You shake your head, Eva; but it must be so."

"I can't, my dear."

"Do you mean to say that you will allow your father's childish whim—for it's nothing else; he can't find any objection to me as a husband for you, and he knows it—that you will allow his childish whim to spoil your life and mine? Remember you are twenty-six and I am thirty-two."

"I can't do it. I daren't. I'm mad with myself for feeling like this, but I daren't. And even if I dared, I wouldn't. Clive, you don't know! You can't tell how it is!"

Her sorrowful pathetic firmness daunted him. She was now composed, mistress again of herself; and her moral force dominated his.

"Then you and I are to be unhappy all our lives, Eva?"

The soft influences of the night seemed to direct her voice as, after a long pause, she uttered the words: "No one is ever quite unhappy in all this world." There was another pause, as she gazed steadily down into the wonderful valley. "We must wait."

"Wait!" echoed Clive with angry grimness. "He will live for twenty years."

"No one is ever quite unhappy in all this world," she repeated dreamily, as one might turn over a treasure in order to examine it.

Now for the epilogue to the feud. Two years passed, and it happened that there was to be a revival at the Bethesda Chapel. One morning the superintendent minister and the revivalist called on Ezra Brunt at his shop. When informed of their presence, the great draper had an impulse of anger,

for, like many stouter chapel-goers than himself, he would scarcely tolerate the intrusion of religion into commerce. However, the visit had an air of ceremony, and he could not decline to see these ambassadors of heaven in his private room. The revivalist, a cheery, shrewd man, whose powers of organization were obvious and who seemed to put organization before everything else, pleased Ezra Brunt at once. "We want a specially good congregation at the opening meeting to-night," said the revivalist. "Now, the basis of a good congregation must necessarily be the regular pillars of the church, and therefore we are making a few calls this morning to insure the presence of our chief men, the men of influence and position. You will come, Mr. Brunt, and you will let it be known among your employees that they will please you by coming, too?" Ezra Brunt was by no means a regular pillar of the Bethesda, but he had a vague sensation of flattery, and he consented; indeed, there was no alternative.

The first hymn was being sung when he reached the chapel. To his surprise, he found the place crowded in every part. A man whom he did not know led him to a wooden form which had been put in the space between the front pews and the communion rail. He felt strange there, and uneasy, apprehensive. The usual discreet somnolence of the chapel had been disturbed as by some indecorous but formidable awakener; the air was electric; anything might occur. Ezra was astounded by the mere volume of the singing; never had he heard such singing. At the end of the hymn the congregation sat down, hiding their faces in expectation. The revivalist stood, erect and terrible in the pulpit, no longer a shrewd, cheery man of the world, but the very mouthpiece of the wrath and mercy of God. Ezra's self-importance dwindled before that gaze till from a renowned magnate of the Five Towns he became an item in the multitude of suppliants. He profoundly wished he had never come.

"Remember the hymn," said the revivalist, with austere emphasis:

> "My richest gain I count but loss,
> And pour contempt on all my pride."

The admirable histrionic art with which he intensified the consonants in the last line produced a tremendous effect.

Not for nothing was this man celebrated throughout Methodism as a saver of souls. When, after a pause, he raised his hand and ejaculated, "Let us pray," sobs could be heard throughout the chapel. The revival had begun.

At the end of a quarter of an hour, Ezra Brunt would have given fifty pounds to be outside, but he could not stir. He was magnetized. Soon the revivalist came down from the pulpit and stood within the communion rail, whence he addressed the nearmost part of the people in low, soothing tones of persuasion. Apparently he ignored Ezra Brunt, but the man was convicted of sin and felt himself melting like an icicle in front of a fire. He recalled the days of his youth, the piety of his father and mother, and the long traditions of a stern Dissenting family; he had backslidden, slackened in the use of the means of grace, run after the things of this world. It is true that none of his chiefest iniquities presented themselves to him; he was quite unconscious of them, even then; but the lesser ones were more than sufficient to overwhelm him. Class leaders were now reasoning with stricken sinners, and Ezra, who could not take his eyes off the revivalist, heard the footsteps of those who were going to the "inquiry room" for more private counsel. In vain he argued that he was about to be ridiculous; that the idea of him, Ezra Brunt, a professed Wesleyan for half a century, being publicly "saved" at the age of fifty-seven, was not to be entertained; that the town would talk; that his business might suffer if for any reason he should be morally bound to apply to it too strictly the principles of the New Testament. He was under the spell. The tears coursed down his long cheeks, and he forgot to care, but sat entranced by the revivalist's marvelous voice. Suddenly, with an awful sob, he bent and hid his face in his hands. The spectacle of the old, proud man helpless in the grasp of profound emotion was a sight to rend the heart-strings.

"Brother, be of good cheer," said a tremulous and benign voice above him. "The love of God compasseth all things. Only believe."

He looked up, and saw the venerable face and long white beard of George Christopher Timmis.

Ezra Brunt shrank away, embittered and ashamed.

"I cannot," he murmured with difficulty.

"The love of God is all-powerful."

"Will it make you part with that bit o' property, think you?" said Ezra Brunt, with a kind of despairing ferocity.

"Brother," replied the aged servant of God, unmoved, "if my shop is in truth a stumbling-block in this solemn hour, you shall have it."

Ezra Brunt was staggered.

"I believe. I believe!" he cried.

"Praise God!" said the chemist, with majestic joy.

Three months afterwards Eva Brunt and Clive Timmis were married. It is characteristic of the fine sentimentality which underlies the surface harshness of the inhabitants of the Five Towns that, though No. 54 Machin Street was duly transferred to Ezra Brunt, the chemist retiring from business, he has never rebuilt it to accord with the rest of his premises. In all its shabbiness it stands between the other big dazzling shops as a reminding monument.

# MAY: A Professor's Love Story, by Ernst Müllenbach; Translated from the German by Neil Carew.*

WHAT a beautiful spring it was! Just as if it had been made to order by a poet for a happy pair of lovers. In the beginning of March the last ice carnival had been held, at which fair-haired Greta Schaffner had quarrelled with her true knight, the young professor, Karl Borndorf, leading her shrewd friends to conclude for the hundredth time that these two would be the next to become engaged. Six weeks later the gardens and orchards which surrounded the town and extended to the beech forest on the heights were covered with white cherry blossoms. The farmer does not like so early a spring, but the city people delighted in it, and the skies were in accordance with the feeling of the majority, and continued the fair weather as if there were a full supply of it for all succeeding months.

In the garden of the university, outside the windows of auditorium No. 8, a nightingale sat among the blossoms of a great magnolia tree and sang as insistently as if he alone had the right at this season to lecture to the students. It was small wonder, when one considers that his was the only course that had been begun punctually on the first day of the summer term, the 2d of April, for years and years. But he had never found his desk, the magnolia tree, so beautifully decorated since his first return from the long vacation on the Nile. So he made a special effort this time; he had already been addressing the class for two weeks, day and night, and it was not his fault if one of the students behind the window panes allowed his observations to pass unheeded.

*Translated for Short Stories.

At any rate, they influenced Professor Karl Borndorf who, on the last day of this sunny, lazy April, as on every other Tuesday and Friday, from six to seven o'clock, lectured on "Old Germanic Myths and Folk Lore." To-day, when he came to the end of his speech, he raised his eyes from his book and smiled at his colleague in the magnolia, Then, with a commanding look, as a general collects his forces, he caught the attention of his pupils, who were already beginning to put up their books, stroked his brown mustache, and said:

"Even among our own surroundings, gentlemen, at this particular season of the year we find many of these old Germanic customs springing to life again like the flowers and the songs of spring and of love—like love itself. To-day, as in centuries past, on the eve of the day which was once the most important festival of the Germanic peoples, the village youths go into the country with great secrecy. There they gather the flowering may, and on the first night of May they place it before the windows of their sweethearts as a declaration, often, perhaps, the first formal acknowledgment of their feelings and hopes. But the maiden who is over coy, arrogant and cold is given the false may, and when she opens her windows on May day, she finds a branch of the gnarled wild cherry as a sign that she has driven away the suitor, who thus shows her what her character is—early blossoming, but hard, obstinate and untender. We of the cities have forgotten this flower language, gentlemen, and have exchanged it for other learning. But its spirit reaches us from time to time, and in the suburbs at least, where the villas of the city business men encroach on the tilled fields, one who gets up early enough shall find here and there on the first of May a house before which is laid the may—or possibly the false may."

After this discourse Dr. Karl Borndorf took leave of his three faithful pupils and left auditorium No. 8 to take an evening walk in the woods and work out poetically the substance of his learned remarks.

Heaven had endowed him liberally. The young professor had already a fair reputation for scholarship, and, in addition to being well connected, he was the favorite pupil of the well-known Geheimrath Schaffner and nephew of old Professor Wendelin Borndorf, who occupied the chair of botany in the university and was as famous for his learning as for his absent-

mindedness. But as a budding poet Dr. Borndorf was the soul of all private theatricals and such affairs in college circles. He was a valuable assistant, who always found something appropriate to write for a "polter-abend," a jubilee, a dedication, or a charity fair. Without imagining himself a Goethe, he plied this art of verse-making with untiring willingness, and even with pleasure, when the name of Greta Schaffner was among those who had need of it.

"Of course she is to be there again," he would remark in the same tone and with the same resigned smile with which Greta, when she was invited to take part in these entertainments, said:

"Well, we must learn another dozen of Dr. Borndorf's allegorical verses by heart and accept his lectures on incorrect intonation patiently at rehearsals." The patience was of a peculiar kind, to be sure, and the intercourse between author and leading lady was punctuated by remarks as sharp as a hedgehog's quills; but the strange thing was that he gave her the best parts and the prettiest verses time after time, and that she followed his instructions minutely when the performance came off, although she had run counter to them with a shrug of her shoulders or with affected amiability at rehearsals.

"It's the funniest thing about those two," old Mrs. Mahlke used to say. "When they were school children—heavens, I have known them from their cradles!—well, then, right through their school days they were the best of comrades; and now, why they quarrel so that they can scarcely endure each other."

But it had really gone too far at the last rehearsal. The occasion was a little play for the "polter-abend" of a friend of Greta's who was to marry a man in the forestry department, and Greta, in the rôle of "wood-fairy," had the lion's share of poetry. At first all went well, but when Dr. Borndorf announced that for technical reasons he must lengthen the wood-fairy's monologue some three minutes, and the wood-fairy exclaimed: "Good heavens! more of the stuff?" the trouble began. Greta Schaffner had the last word, as usual, but she realized that she had overstepped the bounds of politeness. "It's all his fault, though," she tried to tell herself in answer to her qualms of conscience, "why can't he put an end to it?"

It was with an air of great decision that Dr. Karl Borndorf placed his "Monologue of the Wood-fairy" in an envelope with a short accompanying note, directed it to Miss Greta Schaffner, and set out to leave it personally at the Schaffners' house in Bismarck Street. But he chose an hour in which only important telegrams are usually delivered—between one and two o'clock in the morning. He glided through the streets of the suburbs with their little houses as like as peas in a pod, as quietly as a thief, and, in addition to the letter, he drew from beneath his cloak something which, however, he did not put in the post box. But he was not unobserved. The old night watchman of the district, who had made himself a very comfortable resting place in the doorway of the opposite house with the help of his cloak rolled up like a pillow, recognized the quiet visitor and took note of what he was doing.

"Now, see that!" the watchman growled to himself. "The idea of these city folks having nothing better to do. Ever since the Kneipp cure came in they must copy the peasants in everything."

Then he got up and walked after the retreating figure with the greeting: "Good evening, Doctor. May I trouble you for a light?"

"Certainly," replied Karl Borndorf, with quick understanding, and he brought forth his well-filled cigar case.

The watchman congratulated himself that the professor had not forgotten this form of student expression.

"Thank you, Doctor," he said, drawing out two cigars and sticking them in his waistcoat pocket. "You can rely on me; I have seen nothing," and he helped himself to another cigar, which he lighted at the flame of his lantern.

Then they parted with friendly nods, and Bismarck Street was quiet and dark again save for the occasional tapping of the watchman's stick on the pavement, and the glow of his cigar, which shone like a giant lightning bug in the May night.

Toward six o'clock in the morning the watchman went home to fortify himself with breakfast and sleep for new duties, among which was that of dog-catcher.

At daybreak other young men with green branches in their hands flitted about with an air of great mystery, stopping at sundry doors and windows without being disturbed by the

night watchman. As it grew light the street became alive with people. Whistling bakers' boys trudged along and hung their baskets of bread on the door-knobs. Here and there a servant girl peeped out of the house expectantly, simpered and blushed when she saw a may branch outside, but did not take it in, for her master and mistress must first admire it, and, above all, the neighboring maids who were not favored with such a love token must behold and envy. At seven o'clock, before the shutters of the houses were opened, the first city pedestrian appeared. This was Professor Wendelin Borndorf, called simply Wendelinus by the students, a round little gentleman with long, white locks, spectacles on his nose, and a lorgnette hanging from his neck, for he was very near-sighted. He was as early a riser as any old maid, and it was his habit to take a walk in the woods as soon as the sun was well up, deep in thought over an engrossing problem, and usually carrying in his hand something that he had picked up on his way and would lay down elsewhere in his absent-mindedness. This time he held a branch between his fingers, a gnarled, crooked branch with white flowers.

Before the window of the Schaffner house his attention was attracted. He laid down the wild cherry spray and held the new object of interest close to his spectacles.

"To be sure," he murmured, "the may. Betula, quite right, *betula alba*, our true may. And tied with a blue ribbon. How singular."

Then he meandered on, deep in his problems again, and entirely unconscious that he still carried the brance of *betula alba* in his hand. But ten or twelve houses farther on he saw a couple of servant girls standing together and regarding another such branch with smirks and nudges. Then he recollected himself.

"Oho!" he thought, "if that is the case, I must take this thing back where it belongs. Where was it, though?"

He retraced his steps, peering at the houses with both spectacles and lorgnette, and stopped before a window.

"It must have been here," he said with satisfaction, and he laid the branch on the window-sill.

At the same moment something black and bristly-looking appeared close to his face, an odor of soot assailed his nose, and when he turned round a chimney-sweep stood before him with a ladder, brushes and the other tools of his trade; a young,

well-grown lad he was, with shining eyes. The grimy fellow pointed to a similar branch in the doorway of the house, and said threateningly:

"See here, you, do you know that *I* put that there?"

The professor inspected the huge may and nodded comprehendingly.

"Yes, yes!" he said, with a smile of radiant friendliness. "I understand! Ah, love, love! But don't despair, my friend, perhaps the young woman will give you the preference over your rival. I see you have selected *betula pendula*, the so-called weeping-birch. Why was that? You should not lose courage so quickly. Good morning to you, my dear fellow."

With these words of comfort he turned and continued his walk. The other stared after him in perplexity, then pulled the door-bell violently, and when the maid came to the door, began a harangue in tones which did not harmonize with the gentle tribute he had laid on the door sill at dawn.

When Miss Greta Schaffner came down to breakfast an hour later a letter lay beside her plate. She smiled as she recognized the handwriting.

"Well, Babette, did you get any may?" she asked the housekeeper as she opened the envelope. She had innocently stumbled on a sore point, for Babette had waited twenty years for her first may, and found the reminder of it bitter.

"Good heavens!" she said, shrugging her shoulders, "I am glad that no one bothers me with such nonsense. The girl next door has fought with her young man already this morning because he came along as an old gentleman from the town was leaving a piece of may for her."

Greta was not listening; her whole mind was occupied with the verses of the amateur poet. "Yes?" she asked absent-mindedly, and continued reading.

"Yes," Babette went on, eyeing her. "I don't know what has come over the city folks; they are playing all sorts of tricks. Now, look what was on our window ledge this morning! The night watchman, the one who took our Azor to the pound, saw who put it there. And who do you think? Young Dr. Borndorf."

The paper in Greta's hand trembled, she grew pale and stared speechlessly at the spray of wild cherry that Babette placed beside her plate.

"Now, what do you say to that?" asked the good Babette, "Was that nice?"

"No, certainly not," said poor Greta, with unsteady voice. "Throw the thing into the fire, Babette, and say nothing to your master about it."

She rose and left the room, and Babette looked after her well satisfied.

"That settles it," she thought; and she might well say so.

The theatricals were going badly. Greta Schaffner had retracted her promise to take part and had fallen out with several of her friends in consequence. A substitute for the character of wood-fairy was found, but the poet and director seemed to have lost interest in the affair, and excused himself on the plea of studies, leaving the young ladies to do what they could with his verses by themselves. Greta Schaffner had returned his poetical effusion on the true and false may, with the following note:

"Miss Greta Schaffner thanks Dr. Karl Borndorf for his tactful remembrance and begs that he will spare her his attentions in future."

Since then he had foresworn society and lived among old German manuscripts. His scornful lady went around looking so troubled and pale that even her learned father noticed it; her diary was the repository of several closely-written pages full of the hollowness of life, longing for death, and impressive exclamation points. She also spent hours walking in the woods, and when she met Professor Wendelin Borndorf, she returned his paternal greeting with a certain sympathetic friendliness, as if to commiserate him on being afflicted with such a nephew.

Of course, Professor Wendelin Borndorf had no idea that there was anything wrong between his nephew and the fair-haired daughter of his colleague, Schaffner. But about a week after that portentous May day he made a great discovery. He was sitting in the wood on a bench by the road which led from the town to a village on the heights, letting the morning breeze play with his venerable locks, and gazing thoughtfully up into the branches of an oak tree in front of him. Suddenly he became aware of a round object that seemed to protrude from the middle of a broad branch. He

reinforced the spectacles by the lorgnette, peered up excitedly, muttering to himself, and finally rose and began a zealous attempt to clamber up the tree. But the trunk was too thick and the lowest branch was several feet above his highest jump.

At this moment the young chimney-sweep happened to come along whistling. He had work to do in the village on the hill and was in full working trim. When he recognized the old gentleman he stopped whistling and scowled.

"Ah, my lad, you come at the right time with your ladder," cried the professor in delight. "Would you mind helping me up this tree? I believe I see something up there that demands my presence."

An unholy grin spread over the face of the chimney-sweep.

"I'll take care of you, all right!" he said, placing the ladder against the tree. The professor mounted, swung himself into the branches, and climbed toward his goal with such eagerness that he did not see his helper take away the ladder and hide behind a bush some distance off.

"It actually is *viscum album*, the popular misletoe! The first time I have ever seen the species on this sort of tree!" cried the professor from above, greatly excited.

"Now we will see how he gets down again," said the chimney-sweep below, complacently.

Half an hour later Greta Schaffner came and sat down on the bench. She loved this place, so shady and solemn, particularly when the wind played among the branches.

"'The forest rustles, the clouds float by," she quoted, and raised her blue eyes to the tree. There, close to the mistletoe, she saw the professor, with blackened hands and dangling legs. He bowed to her benevolently, pointed to the parasite, and called down:

"This is indeed a lucky morning, dear child. See this—this big piece of mistletoe, *viscum album*. The common people call it also oak mistletoe, but, as a matter of fact, it very seldom grows on the oak trees, and this is the first time I have ever seen it in our locality. Am I not to be congratulated?"

"How did you get up there, professor?" asked Greta.

"A kind young man, a chimney-sweep, helped me with his ladder. But I don't see him now. Do you see him anywhere, child?"

"I see neither man nor ladder," replied Greta.

"Oh," said the professsor, "I am sorry. I remember now that I neglected to ask him to wait. Will you please get me another ladder, my dear? I really think I had better not attempt to jump."

"For heaven's sake, don't, professor," cried Greta. "Stay where you are, and I will see if I can get help."

She must have walked about five minutes before she saw two people; they were her father and—Dr. Borndorf. The geheimrath had brought his companion into this secluded place to confide to him his theories regarding certain questions of Gothic acoustics. Hastily, and without looking at Karl, Greta told her father of the professor's plight.

"Hm! What are we going to do about it?" asked the geheimrath. "If you were to notify the fire department to send the hook and ladder company—"

"I think we can manage," interrupted the doctor, stretching himself to the full height of his tall figure, "if Miss Schaffner will show us the way to the tree."

"With pleasure," said Greta, coldly, and led the way.

"The hypocrite!" she thought. "He has sat under that tree with me for many years, and knows where it is as well as I do. He only wishes to annoy me with his presence."

The professor was waving a branch of mistletoe at them in the distance.

"A splendid discovery, my friends," he cried. "But where is your ladder?"

"I am afraid we must do without, uncle," said the doctor, standing under the tree. "But if you will put your foot on my shoulder—"

"That isn't necessary, sir," said the chimney-sweep, emerging from his hiding place. "The old gentleman should have whistled for me; I was in the wood picking wild flowers. But I want to take this chance to ask the gentleman why he brought my girl a may branch when he didn't even know her. Such foolishness isn't dignified for a learned gentleman with white hair."

The professor meantime had descended the ladder. He looked at his questioner in amazement.

"Ah," he said, "now I remember. It was in Bismarck Street, wasn't it? Why, my dear fellow, that was a mistake. You refer to a branch of flowering may tied with a blue ribbon, do you not? It was lying on the window-sill when I came

along. I took it away absent-mindedly, and was merely putting it back."

Dr. Karl Borndorf looked doubtfully at his uncle and then at Greta, who had changed color, and was leaning against the oak.

"Are you sure, uncle, that you put the may back in the right window?" he asked. "Perhaps it belonged to the next house."

"There was a wild cherry branch there," said Greta, with downcast eyes, pulling at an oak leaf.

"Oh, good gracious, yes!" exclaimed the professor. "I had been carrying that in my hand. Where could my wits have been that morning? Ah, tell me, my friend," he continued, taking the geheimrath a few paces aside, "do you suppose that this unknown servant girl of your neighbor's could—what shall I say—bring suit against me on account of this misunderstanding? It would be very unpleasant."

"No, I don't think so," laughed the geheimrath, and he beckoned to the chimney-sweep.

"You see, my man," he said, "it was all a mistake.

"All right," replied the sweep. "We've made it up, anyway, me and my girl."

"I am very glad to hear it," said the professor, diving into his pocket. "Here, take this and give it to your fiancée?"

The sweep eyed the gold piece undecidedly.

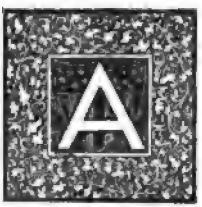
"I won't take any presents for my girl," he said at last, "but I'll tell you, I'll take it for helping you into the tree. With which he pocketed the gold piece and walked off.

"So this is the mistletoe, is it?" asked the geheimrath, examining the twig in his colleague's hand. "Curious! It was a sacred plant to our heathen forefathers, and you know that in England it still retains certain traditions of love; if a man catches a girl under the mistletoe at Christmastide, he may kiss her. And now, what are our young people doing?"

There stood his daughter Greta, directly under the mistletoe-bearing oak, allowing herself to be kissed by Karl Borndorf as unconcernedly as if it were Christmas in England.

"Ah!" said the geheimrath, and smiled contentedly, for the sight pleased him.

"Ah!" repeated the professor, holding the sprig of mistletoe before his spectacles instead of the lorgnette. "Well, May is a blessed month, my friend!"



# CURRENT Feud: The Story of a Coward's Daring, by Francis Keaton*

JOHN PENFIELD'S house stood well back from the road in a grove of young hickory and oak. To the right of it were the barn and hen house, and to the left Cotton Creek, that, shrunk in summer to a sluggish trickle between pools, was in winter a considerable stream, and in heavy rain overflowed its banks with incredible suddenness. Behind the house cotton-fields stretched away to the hills. A mile further on the road were the Kenilworth mines, of which Penfield was superintendent.

Penfield's mother was a thin, listless woman, who had passed her life in an unremitting succession of calico wrappers, down at heel and draggled, with a flock of puny children whimpering after her about the house and garden. For one sight only would her lack-luster eyes kindle, and for that alone she would leave even her snuff stick. Often she would forget her children, sitting on her upturned bucket beside the spring, and gazing at the hills that were unmoving, unchanging, and yet with the morning and the evening the sun and the clouds and the floating moon were never "plumb similar." She was mountain born and missed the rougher life, the terror of raids, and the sudden single crack of a rifle that told of some revenue officer shot in his tracks.

Her son was like his dead father, a pleasant-tempered, sober man, and a "Foot-washin' Baptis'." He was alert and bird-like in poise and movement, but small-boned and lacking strength. He managed his farm and the mine well until Jim Glover came to work on the shovel.

*Written for Short Stories.

Jim was a Georgia Cracker, lank, tall, powerful, and soon reputed "ugly." He bore, on his first appearance in town, a new-healed scar, such as a man might have whose skull had been cracked by a pair of brass knuckles. Perhaps the scar added to his reputation as a fighter.

Although Jim's fighting was excellent, his work was poor. "Nancy Hanks," as the negroes called the steam shovel, fell off in speed. Penfield spoke of this to him twice or thrice without result; finally he told Jim to better his work or lose his place. Jim only scowled.

On the following day the work was worse. Jim's fireman remonstrated, fearing to share the blame. Jim blazed out on him: "You shet you-all's ugly jaw, or Ah'll knock it off'n you."

At that moment Penfield came up. "Jim Glover,' he said, "Ah don't want no shirks around here, nohow. You kin go an' git yer time."

Glover shifted his snuff stick and laughed insultingly. "Ah ain't workin' for no such small potatoes as you. You cain't fire me. Ah's workin' fer the Kenilworth Coal and Iron Comp'ny, and I don't take no discharge 'less'n it's from the Old Man."

"You git through to-night," said Penfield, and moved on to the ore-washer.

That night the men lingered about the "Commissary" discussing the prospect of a fight. Jim, though sullen, was open-handed and eager to share his corn whiskey, while John, though pleasant, was considered close even amongst a stingy people, therefore party feeling ran high.

Now John Penfield at heart was a coward, and when the following morning he saw Jim at the shovel he quailed. Moreover the morning chill was in his bones, a fog hung damp and disheartening over the world. The control of his labor was at stake, so he gathered himself together and came up with a braggart swing.

"Jim, Ah discharged you-all for incompetence. You walk!"

Instantly Jim's face blackened with wrath. "Ah hain't exhibited no incompetence, and Ah hain't workin' for no damned banty." He sloughed his coat with a swing of his shoulders and rolled back his shirt sleeves; the furrows in his cheeks drew into tense lines. "Come on," he said.

Penfield reeled, shrinking from the sight of fists, and know-

ing that he could not knock Jim down. "Ah ain't fightin my men," he said, "Ah's workin' them."

White-lipped, attempting dignity, but full of nervous jerks and cold at heart, he walked to the "Commissary." He rang up the office and stated his case to the boss. Amid buzzings and hummings of the line he gratefully gathered his answer.

"I hold you responsible for results, and will not interfere with your men. Glover is at your disposal."

Going back to the shovel he quivered with present satisfaction, but fear swelled in his heart with the effect of physical pain. On either hand the sides of the cuttings rose high and red, with here and there a glaring white streak of rotted chirt and slate, and frequent openings to other and older cuttings where rains had washed the clay into uncouth curves and gullies. A new fear assaulted him. He traversed these paths to his home at night, their high walls cut off observation and confused sound. Here a man might lie in wait for his foe! Thinking on this, he came into the last alcove the shovel had cut for itself. The men stood expectant. He said "Walk!" and Jim took his discharge wordless and sullen.

When Penfield went home at noon without an appetite, his mother questioned him, drawling and half interested. He told her nothing. When his supper also went untouched she roused herself to a more persistent questioning. By and by the truth came out.

Then Tennie Penfield rose from the sag-seated rocker, and holding the baby on her left arm she straightened to a vigor her son had never seen before in her. She said, "John, he cussed you. He called you a damned plucked Banty rooster. You got to lick him. Don't tell me about no comp'ny; they wants a man. Don't you be afeard, he ain't sech a site bigger'n you. None of my men folks never have run from nobody." She broke down, wailing.

The children stood open-mouthed. Emmy Loo, John's pet, ran to him. "Budder ain't afeard! My budder ain't afeard," she sobbed, then turned on her mother, beating her with tiny hands, for baby fierceness a little mountain cat. There was no escape for John. His undoing was at hand. By his mother's taunts and his baby sister's defense alike he was shamed. He pictured Jim, his ugly scar and big bony hands, and he recoiled from the thought of a fight.

Besides, the farm was poor, and he was the mainstay of that large family. In rough life, though, courage outranks prudence. He must fight.

With the desperate resolution of the weak he took immediate action. Putting on his canvas leggings, he pulled his wide felt hat over a pallid face and went out. He answered not one word to his mother's frantic questions.

In the lean bosom of Tennie maternal solicitousness strove with the joy of conflict. Nervously she put the children to bed, then drew a sack of pine knots near the fire, and sat down to wait. One after another she dropped the knots onto the hearth, and watched them kindle to flame and die to embers. She had no clock, and measured time at night by their burning. Near at hand an owl hooted, curdling her superstitious blood. Last year's leaves, still clinging to the trees, rustled as the wind arose. By and by rain was driven in gusts against the shutter, then the wind died away and the rain poured steadily down. The roof leaked in several places. Presently, for these streams fill rapidly, she heard the rushing of high water in the creek. The night wore on and still the rain poured down and the rushing of the creek grew louder. From the sloping ground around the house she heard wild water pouring into the creek. "Hit sure do rain," she thought. "Ef John's gone out by the mine he caint scacely get back that away thouten he swims his hoss."

When the last pine knot had burned away sickness rose in her breast and became unendurable. She paced the floor, beating her hands in anxiety.

At last, after a wearing waiting, dim light showed through the cracks in the shutter. Tennie unlatched the door and went out through the young trees to the road. Instantly terror clutched her heart. Across the road, in the dawning greyness, loomed a horse, sprawled upon his back was something unrecognizable, limp. By his gait she knew the horse for John's. He came warily, testing the slippery mud for each foothold. Her first collected thought was of an enemy following, screened by the roadside tangle. Her fingers ached for the shotgun hanging over the mantel.

Presently the horse's fore feet were in the water, and his burden still was motionless. A new dread held Tennie to the spot, if John were not already shot dead he would fall

into the stream and be drowned. "Whoa, Rags," she called, "Whoa!" But the little horse came on, wading carefully, until out of his depth, when he swam across and headed for her as he came up the near bank. At her side he stopped. John slid to the ground, incoherent sounds strangling him. He held to Rags' feet and would not let her turn him over.

She slipped her hand under his coat into a wet stickiness. Across his shoulders were welts. The red blood boiled in her face, and she sprang away as if she had touched something loathly. She gasped out, "John, he *whipped* you. Ef Ah hadn't a' been no biggern' an ant Ah'd a made out to sting him onct."

"Mother, mother," he sobbed, "Ah said Ah couldn't lick him but Ah was agoin' to hit him onct, and I did! Oh, Ah did!" She went away from him crying bitterly and bent with shame. Little Rags whinnied and rubbed his soft nose over his master's bowed head.

The next day her friends came to commiserate her, and she learned that the fight, if such it might be called, took place in front of the "Commissary," and that Jim as winner had "celebrated" with his party.

Months have passed away, and summer is on the land.

At the end of a long day, with the sun blazing from the cloudless sky, the wind burning and earth parched underfoot, the evening comes; the sun drops into a low west of molten gold and falls behind the hills, and night lies chill on the tired country. After a time the night wind arises and blows soft films of cloud over the dark, vast heavens. The west, paled from its red glory, is all clear violet and cool gray, melting and merging into the inimitable, unfathomable blue of a night sky. On all sides the cry of frogs arises, piercing, shrill, and sweet—a love song from beside creeks and branches, and from many a greening pool. By such a sunset and through such a summer night John Penfield had ridden Rags to town. His friend the Marshal had asked him to a late supper at the restaurant. "Tony," who proclaimed himself a Greek, had lately come to Cottonsville, and dazzled the farmers with an elaboration of new paint and oil cloth and pressed glass.

The restaurant was one long, narrow room; at the far end an inefficient partition did not part the cooking arrange-

ments from that portion of the establishment designed for guests. During the preparations for supper Tony's long face, and eyes too neighborly by a good inch, could be seen superintending "Kettle Tom."

Gradually the room filled. Everyone was well-behaved, having in view the Marshal's brass buttons.

Talk ran on "Co't" which was "sittin'" on the squaring cotton and on the new town hall in leisurely process of erection.

The Marshal had two guests besides John, and by the time that the western steak was eaten and many waffles washed down by sorghum syrup, the party was in high spirits.

"Ah tell you, suh," Jo Scott said, "Ah never seen a lawyer so floored afore. He was standin' thar with his han's un'er his coat tails a-talkin' confidential to the Jedge an' Jury an' the Co't at large. 'Gus,' he says, 'will you locate the exac' spot whar that first encounter taken place?' 'Lordy, Colonel, I done tole you,' Gus he says, and rolls his eyes powerful, fearin' he would somehow get cotch up wid. But de Colonel he asks him again. With that Gus breaks out perspirin' turrible, an' sweatin' both. Fo' de Lawd, Colonel,' he says, 'you an' me wuz boys toge'er, what you-all askin' me fo'? Fo' de Lawd, Colonel, you *knows* whar Cap'n Parks' watermillion patch is!' And the jury they laughs out."

Jo's story stopped short, for John had brought his fist crashing down on the table. "Thar," he cried, "thar goes the man the county may have to stretch my neck fer yet!" Jim Glover went out at the door lighting a cigar.

After a silence the Marshal spoke, "Shet you' mouth—words is evidence." Jo Scott defended him. "Boys, I seen Jim lookin' mighty ugly las' week, as John's rig comed round a cornder. He riz up his shotgun, but it was Abe, an' he recognized the identity afore Ah gotten thar. Ef Ah was John, Ah'd never let him draw first."

"Glover has a Colt's 38," said the fourth man at the table, and with that they all went out into the night.

Half an hour later there were few loiterers in the street. The electric lights were out, for it was a moonlight night, and the town economical. In front of the post office Penfield was "making a trade" with two men. A few others stood about talking. Glover came up, his hands deep in his trousers pockets. He had been drinking and reeled perceptibly.

He called John aside. No one heard what he said, but John's voice was clear and high, "Ah won't take no threats, Jim Glover." Scarcely had he spoken when he whipped out his revolver and emptied the six chambers into Jim so quickly that the reports were almost instantaneous, then he leapt aside and threw down the empty revolver as he ran. In a moment he was lost in the uncertain shadows of a moonlit alley.

Alarm, horror, shock, confusion, pity, expectancy, withheld pursuit.

Glover, who had not been three paces distant, turned awkwardly and spread out his arms. Two men led him nearly a block to the nearest drug store.

The Marshal had been directly across the street from John. He caught his breath, swore, called on the by-standers, and started in chase. Some ran one way, some another. Clouds drifted heavily over the moon. Shouts sounded loud in the sleeping town. Men and women ran to the windows and called out for news. Little negro boys danced about shivering with excitement, whispering with a blood-curdled exultation, "Dey'll get de dawgs, dey'll get de dawgs!" But the bloodhounds were not needed. A big black negro was close behind the Marshal, "De cotton warehouse, Marsh," he called. The Marshal turned down Western Avenue and the negro to the other end of the alley. His instinct was true. There was the flying figure of Penfield. He ran him under the high platform, where the cotton bales are dumped. The alley was too dark for the Marshal to see what was happening at the far end of the platform. He halted to listen. The negro had plunged on hands and knees into the blackness under the platform, following the murderer.

John, thinking escape ahead, dashed on. At the far end of the platform he rose suddenly before the Marshal who, startled, pulled the trigger of his revolver and fired four shots into the ground between them before John could stop him. "Quit Bill, Ah give up," he said. At that moment the negro got his arms around John's body and was hardly to be plucked off, nor persuaded. John walked without handcuffs to the jail.

In the drug store where Jim lay was a gathering of physicians, come uncalled, for every man accustomed to it recognizes the sound of "shooting to kill." Five bullets were found

to have entered Glover's body, the sixth having pierced his coat collar.

Glover did not die. Penfield was housed in jail until the danger was over and then allowed out on bail. In prison John had sat behind the bars cheerfully talking to visitors or reading his Bible—but outside in the town again he was a changed man, going around nervous and watchful.

The trial would be in the autumn. Public opinion divided on his guilt or innocence. John's friends claimed that after the fight Glover had threatened to "do for him next time," and that, on the night of the shooting Glover had taken his right hand from his trousers pocket and reached back for his revolver, but that John saw the motion and was too quick for him. They claimed, too, that Jim's friends had filched the revolver from his pocket while leading him up the street to prove him innocent of that first move. But that Jim Glover ever went unarmed was incredible.

As the summer wore on Jim speedily strengthened and was at work again in four months from the day of his shooting.

Jim boarded in a house that John must pass on his way to town. John never rode alone. Where the road, with its border of luxuriant growth, followed the creek he was vigilant. Every sassafras tree and elder bush, every shadowy cedar and tangle of blackberry vine with trumpet creeper held for him a threat.

The long stretch of clay road, red as a blood orange, the hard blue sky, and even the far purple mountains seemed to him to palpitate as he drew near—they seemed sentient and fearful, like himself.

To John the mountains were not the dream of beauty they were to his mother. Whether the storm clouds hung black over them and shadows lay below in an almost palpable density, or whether the early dawn showed their every feature in a distinctness that was revelation, they were the same to him. His eyes sought a certain forest in a deep ravine, and he would think, "Yonder Ah kin hide." Behind the thought was the presupposition that Jim would attack him, and this time he *must* be killed.

Late one Saturday afternoon John was returning from town with Uncle Primus, a grizzled negro, beside him. The buggy-top was pushed down so that John might see all around with

no obstruction. As they neared the path to the creek, he gave the lines to Uncle Primus, felt his revolver and drew forward his shotgun, his thoughts concentrated on the possibilities of that path.

Primus, beside him, proud to drive a blooded horse, was chuckling and calling out "Up a step, suh," and "Whoa, suh," and "Now thar, you!" He saw nothing and thought of nothing in this world but Rags' dainty steps. And even so they came abreast of an empty house, Rags turned his ears and Primus chuckled again.

John's eyes were fascinated by the swaying of a grape vine partly down the path. As they drew past the house he clicked his tongue for Rags to trot. As the horse moved into his long stride, at the very moment that his quickened speed baffled the aim, there was a rifle shot from the house and then another. Rags, used to hunting, stood still, while Uncle Primus, gutteral with fear, urged him on. But John turned, and springing from the buggy to the window in the end of the house, emptied his shotgun into the door behind which, if anywhere, in that single empty room, his enemy must be. His blood beat so loud and surged so madly in his ears that he could not hear.

Jim pitched forward, pushing to the door, and fell with clutching hands, across the floor. John leaned through the broken window and poured the contents of his revolver very carefully into the fallen man. Then getting back somehow, blind with triumph, he leaped into the buggy and bade Rags run for his life. At a break-neck speed they reached the house in the last gleams of the sunset.

Uncle Primus, a youth for speed, was out of the buggy before it stopped and tearing Rags free from it. "Fotch de saddle, Abe," he whispered over and over again.

It was the only sound but Tennie's kiss on the tightened lips of her son. She was alive and trembling with her pride in him. Her eyes asked, and he answered, with one foot in the stirrup, "Ah killed my man."

Abe held Emmy Loo up to kiss him, and Uncle Primus held up his reloaded gun. With one motion he set the child down and turned his horse to the cotton fields that stretched behind the house, away toward the mountains.

# HE Drummer of Hickling: The Story of a Strange Happening, by Chas. Fielding Marsh*

"FARE ter me that 'on't give time th' wind hold up in th' east. That hain't shift a point ter-day," said one of the two old men who were leaning over the wall of the bowling-green which lies at the back of an old-fashioned inn on the North Quay at Yarmouth. There had been a slight frost a few weeks previously, but this had broken up and had been followed by a short spell of muggy weather; but the frost had returned with the east wind, and now the country looked hard, black, and dismal. Against the snow-laden sky the arm-like sails of the mills stood out hard and stiff, and the wind whistled as it passed through the rigging of the fishing boats and wherries lying against the quay.

"We don't want that ter come tew hard, dew us, Biller? Shouldn't like ter get our little owd wherry nipped and held fast miles up th' river somewheres, and ha' ter stay there for a week or tew!" went on the first speaker, who was known to his friends as Haddock-eye, an account of the sightless orb on the left side of his face.

"Well, I don't like th' looks on her," Billy answered. "She be freezen' now somethen' sharp; but that take a rum spell o' weather afore th' river get laid. I reckon we can fetch another cargo o' ice, or, maybe, tew or t'ree cargo, afore th' river's laid; I ain't afeard for this trip, anyways."

"She be a proper little owd wherry, bain't she, Biller?" and Haddack-eye took the clay pipe out of his mouth and pointed with the stem to a dilapidated old craft made fast to a ring at the end of the bowling-green wall.

"That she be," replied Breezy Billy emphatically, "that she

*From Longman's Magazine.

be. I knowed we worn't so far out when we shot nine pound apiece and went partners for her. Lor! if th' weather only keep gain for us, and we keep maken' t'ree or four pound for every cargo o' ice, as we ha' done with th' last tew, she'll sune pay herself, dang me if she 'on't. Yes, I reckon owd Silky Smith wor a trifle riled he didn't give th' price arst for her."

"I hear he'd been a-tryen' ter buy her a fortnight afore we chipped in," replied Haddock-eye, and the two old men rubbed their hands and chuckled as they turned to have another look at their bargain.

"Howd yer noise, Biller; haar he come across th' green. I seed him yesterday a-cranen' over th' wall and eyen' on her wishly."

A tall old man, somewhat younger than Breezy Billy and Haddock-eye, with thin yellow-gray hair, sharp features, and small ferret-like eyes, walked to where the two old men were standing. He gave them a nod and began to fill his pipe.

"Yer a couple o' sharp owd critters, ain't yer?" he broke out after a silence of some minutes. "Thought yer wor right clarver, daresay, when yer cut in and bought th' Armine and Althea from under my wery nose. 'Tain't no use yer sayen' yer don't know narthen' about my tryen' ter buy her; I know Haddocky knowed I wor arter her, if yer didn't, Breezer; I'd bid up ter fifteen pound for her, and would ha' gone th' rest. Cutten' in like that, and never sayen' narthen' ter me! Ah! some folks is sharp, tew sharp sometimes; dew yer be careful yer don't cut yerselves."

"He dew keep praten' on, don't he, Biller?" said Haddock-eye scornfully. "Ter hear him talk one 'ud think we wor a couple o' thieves. Th' owd wherry wor up for sale, had been up for sale a month, and we paid th' price; what's he got ter mob us about? No, we hain't done no sharp practices as I know on; but there, it 'on't dew ter come ter words about it, come and ha' a glass o' liquor, Silky. Cos tew poor owd critters like ourselves ha' gone in for a bit o' icen', don't go and put us down for a couple o' North End sharks. Ha' a drop o' spirits?" Silky hesitated, but the comfort of a dram on a cold morning like this outweighed the bitterness of his feelings, and he turned and followed the two men into the bar.

"Well," he said, as he sipped his rum, "now yer got th' owd

wherry, how dew she handle? Not so wery gain, be she?"

"I ha' knowed handier craft," replied Billy; "still, for an owd-fashioned one she ain't so bad. She sartenly don't keep as nigh inter wind as what she might dew, and with th' tide agen her it's a shoulder breeze all th' way. Still we hain't done so wery bad; we got tew loads o' ice down in a week, and we're arter another ter-day. Th' only thing as be th' matter be th' crew. We ain't so young as we wor, Silky, and icen' be hard work; and then my partner he be kinder skeared o' bein' out o' nights, he be," and Billy laughed. "I tells him them days o' Tom-pokers be gone; but there, he fare ter be kinder skeared ter go for'ard ter get a pull on th' peak when 'tis dark, and every light he see on th' mashes he seem ter think is them owd hobby-lanthorns."

"Kinder skeared are yer, Haddocky?" said Silky, his little eyes brightening with a look of interest. "Maybe yer ain't used ter boaten' about these here rivers much o' nights?"

"No, I ain't," Haddock-eye answered. "Fact is, when I wor a lad I wor right skeared on a wherry, and I allus think on it when I'm on one o' nights. It wor like this: My father he owned a wherry, he did, and we laid agen th' Malthousen over at Southtown one night, goin' ter take in malt for Bullard o' Norwich. Father he comed home drunk; I could hear him a-comen' over th' bridge, for he kept holleren' ter me ter get him a great owd onion for his supper. Well, he stepped on th' bow o' th' wherry and overboard he go; th' tide wor a-runnen' out o' th' harbor right sharp, and they never did find un. Well, that gave me a tarn, yer may be sure, and tew or t'ree nights arterwards I wor sitten' on th' same wherry, nigh agen th' same place, when I happen ter look up, and there sat my father on th' wherry's forepeak, and he wor a-peelen' of a onion. Afore I could ha' my say he blowed off, and I seed him a-sitten' on another wherry t'other side o' th' harbor."

Breezy Billy exclaimed, "Well, there, that dew beat everything that I ever did hear tell on. What wor he a-peelen' of, a onion, dew yer say?"

"Yes, a peelen' of a onion, and I seed him sev'ral times arter that."

"How'd yer know 'tworn't a apple, or a orange, or a bit o' owd swede he wor a-peelen'?" asked Billy again.

"Why, that wor so natural-like I could smell th' onion. What an owd fule yer are, Breezer! Think I couldn't scent on it? think I'm a liar?"

"Well, if he dew, I don't," put in Silky. "Th' man must know his own father, sure*ly*, and th' man must be able ter smell onion. Ah! some folk say there ain't such things as spirits and ghostses. I knows different. I ha' had my troubles with 'em afore now; that allus seem ter show yer ignorance ter laugh at people who ha' seen more nor other folk. Well, Haddocky, how'd yer go on arter that?"

"Oh, I chucked up th' wherryen' and went deek-drawen'. Then I went ter sea. I never did much wherryen' till I come partners along o' Breezer last week, and that skeared feelen' dew come back, I finds."

"Well, maybe yer'll get over it, maybe yer won't," said Silky oracularly. "Still, sitiwated as yer be, I fare ter think I should ha' bought some other craft than th' Armine and Althea. There's somethen' about her as I can't quite get over. Dew she take up much, Breezer?"

"She dew suck a little juice inter her 'tween wind and water; some o' her top streaks are a bit sumpy-like; but, for an owd wherry, she don't take a lot inter her."

"Oh, she dew a little, dew she? Well, she must be nigh on a hundred year old, and most wherries'd be kinder crank at her age." Silky looked knowing.

"She bain't so old as that, be she?" Billy exclaimed.

"Well, all I knows is that I ha' been maken' a deal o' inquiration about her. Never heerd tell o' such a wherry! She seem ter be allus a-choppen' and a-changen' o' her name; that show she be a wonnerful onlucky craft. As far as that go, I can remember sev'ral names she ha' gone under. Let me see, she's th' Armine and Althea now. Well, afore that she wor th' Tew Sisters, then she ha' been th' Martham Wonder, then th' Come and Catch Me, all in my time. Then an owd chap what live over on Cobham Island tell me his father told him how she wor called the Triumph; and he hisself remember her as th' Harnser o' Stalham. Look at all them names! What they want ter keep alteren' her for if she hain't done somethen', drownded people or sich-like? Ah! yer thought yerselves main clarver, but yer don't know what yer got holden 'on tergether. Since I made inquiration about her I ain't so wery sorry she don't belong ter me. Still, that may

be all talk," Silky added as he rose to go. "Where yer off ter for yer next load?"

"We're a-goen' up ter Hicklen' as sune as th' tide sarve; Hicklen' ice be gude sheer ice," replied Billy.

"Yes, gude enow ice at Hicklen'; reckoned some o' th' best, but they be rum people and a rum place. When yer gets up there, ask 'em if they ha' heerd th' Drummer lately. Fare ye well." And so saying Silky Smith went out of the bar.

"Well, we ha' heerd somethen'," said Billy gloomily. "But there, don't yer pay no regard ter such talk, dew yer hain't got no maunder o' sense in yer. Tide's maken' up, let's be a-goin'! Shall us take tew gallon o' baar along o' us? I don't seem ter care about this housen's baar; fare ter me ter be whip belly wengeance; that sarved me out th' last time I tried some on't. Let's ha' a bottle o' rum."

"Let's ha' tew bottle," replied Haddock-eye.

The Armine and Althea lay straining at her moorings; groaning, creaking, and rubbing her sides against the quay as the dirty yellow incoming tide swirled and rushed past her, smacking under her bluff bow, and making tiny whirlpools as it raced round her rudder, from time to time lifting her against the green, slimy quay with a thud that shook her old timbers from stem to stern. Silky Smith was not far out when he put her age at a hundred years. Built on different lines from the wherries of to-day, with a somewhat upturned bow and a flat stern, she was a much-battered old craft, patched inside and out, and with sides gray for the want of a coat of tar. On close inspection you could see that the cabin had once been painted green, and there were still patches of rusty white paint on her stern-post and rudder. She had had her day, and of late had only been employed to carry refuse from the town dustbins, or to do similar work which other wherries declined.

"With this here easterly breeze she orter make a gude run on it," said Billy as he crawled to the stern with his quant to his shoulder.

"That she will, as sune as we get clear o' this bridge," replied Haddock-eye, whose drooping spirits had begun to revive at the prospect of the sail. "Dang all about changen' her name, she fare to dew us pretty tid'ly. She'll make us another t'ree or four pound; if she don't my name ain't Haddock-eye."

The old wherry's much-patched and discolored sail was now

drawing well, the sheet right off. A large wave, made by the pace with which the boat displaced the water, careered along the mud-banks of the river, curling over and over, sluicing out holes and corners as it followed the wherry in her course.

"That be th' t'ree-mile-house, Haddocky, and that be only half arter eight now. That be th' eight twenty-five train out o' Yarmouth. Hear her? We orter be on Heigham Sounds afore t'ree o'clock, and we'll load up afore dark. Bain't that somethen' cold? Getten' busky tew. She be goin' top speed; there she foam!"

The wind howled, and fine snow was being whirled in dust-like clouds across the marshes, blotting out the distant landscape, powdering the sail and the two old men sitting in the stern. Haddock-eye sat motionless, the snow hanging to his whiskers and collecting on his chest, while Billy with his back to the heavy tiller, one leg stuck out against the stern-sheets and with a face all aglow with the exertion of keeping the wherry in her course, from time to time hauled the sheet through the blocks, calling out, "Now she jibe," as the old craft ran through another reach of the river.

"Haar we go through Stokesby," said Hoddack-eye as the Armine and Althea swept past the red-roofed hamlet of that name. "Hain't been in Stokesby since I used ter sell herrin' when I wor a lad. Sune we'll be at Acle, and afore we lower our marst ter go under th' bridge we'll brotch our bottle o' rum. I feel right chilled, I dew."

"Well, let's ha' a drop o' it now," said Billy. "I can dew with a drop, if yer can. I allus say, 'Ha' a drop when yer wants it, and another in betwixt times, so yer don't forget th' taste on it.'" This recommendation was carried out to the letter, for by the time Thurne Mouth was passed but little rum remained in the bottle.

Before the afternoon was far advanced the wherry had turned into Heigham Sounds, and was making her way up the channel of Hickling Broad. The broad was nearly covered with a coat of ice, half an inch thick, and soon there would be no open water left. There was still an acre or two of water at the mouth of the broad, but all day long a chink, chink, chink, told you the ice was fast forming up. The wherries and the marshmen going to work in their boats, had kept an open channel through the Sounds and across the broad to Hickling

Staithe, and the water of this passage looked dark against the gray of the surrounding ice.

Billy and Haddock-eye took off the hatches, disclosing to view an empty hold, with a sprinkling of sawdust on the bottom. The sail was lowered half way down the mast, and the old craft, with the wind astern, put her nose into the ice. Billy went forward, and with a long pole, shod with iron, began to smash the ice ahead, while Haddock-eye, with a huge landing-net made of wire with a big mesh, scooped up the pieces as they floated past and threw them into the hold, where they fell with the noise of breaking glass, and looked in the uncertain light like the silvery scales of some monster fish.

"What 's that yer, Biller?—and blow me if that ain't owd Haddocky, tew," shouted a man who had rowed up in a gun punt.

"What, Chubber? How are yer?" replied Billy. "Didn't fare ter see yer in these parts."

"I live in th' parish now," said the newcomer. "Lived here for sev'ral months; work th' engine in that there mill," and he pointed to a large drainage mill in the distance. "What, are yer arter a cargo o' ice? Can I lend yer a hand? I've got an hour or tew ter spare."

"Shall we hire him, Haddocky?" Billy asked his partner.

"Yes, we can dew with a little help, mate. Then, p'raps, we can get loaden and off th' broad and as far as Knight's afore dark."

"What's this, th' Armine and Althea?" said Chubby, as he stepped on deck. "Thought so; I remembers her when she wor called th' Ludham Trickster."

"My Gawd!" muttered Haddock-eye, "there be another on 'em!"

"Fare ter me," remarked Billy, after a couple of hours' hard work, "we ha' done enow ter her." The hold of the wherry was nearly full, and she had sunk low into the water. "We mustn't load her tew much. I think 'tis about time we give over."

"Wery well, owd pardner, that be time we knock off, daresay. I be all covered o' ice, dang me, if I bain't loaden up with it." Haddock-eye pulled off his mitten and with it brushed the ice from his whiskers. Both men were saturated with the splash of the water as they plied their tools, and the

drops that had settled on hair and whiskers had turned into beads of ice, making the men hoary-headed and no mistake. "Let's put th' hatches on," went on Haddock-eye, "and then go and brotch t'other bottle o' rum, this un's out," and he threw the empty bottle overboard.

"Yer fare ter be gude hands at being masters," said Chubby.

"Shouldn't mind ilen' for yer as long as th' drink holds out. Dew yer allus dew yerselves like this here? dew, I'll stop along o' yer."

"Well! hard work can dew with a deal o' ilen'. Come yer inter cabin," Billy said as he jerked himself out of his frozen garments.

The little cabin was illuminated by the feeble rays of an evil-smelling lamp which swung to and fro as the wind rocked the wherry. The fire in the stove burnt clear in the frosty air. Haddock-eye and Breezy Billy sat on the wooden bunks, holding in their hands steaming glasses of rum, which they blew into to cool, and Chubby, with his glass by his side, busied himself with cutting up a cake of tobacco in his hand. No one spoke, and the silence was only broken by the roar of the wind in the stove-pipe, and, at intervals, by a rumbling sound which seemed to travel round the broad. Haddock-eye listened to it attentively. but without remark, although he had twice gone to the door and put his head out.

"Yer seem ter be wonnerful onaisy, young feller," said Chubby as Haddock-eye brushed past him on a third expedition to the door. "What yer arter?"

"Why, I be listenen' ter that there noise. Didn't notice on it when we wor loaden' up, dew I wor deaf. What dew ye make it out for ter be?"

"Oh! that there rumblen' noise?" answered Chubby. "Hain't yer heerd that afore when yer been icen'?"

"I ha' heerd th' ice cracken', but it worn't like this here duller," said Haddock-eye as he pulled his body back through the narrow doorway. "Can yer 'count for it?"

"Well! I ha' my opinion on it, and that be that th' noise be caused by th' ice formen' up round Swim Chutes, see? Swim Cutes bein' th' only island on th' broad, that fare ter rumble round and round on it. Howsomedever," went on Chubby, pleased to have a tale to tell, "th' folks ha' a notion that th' Hickling drummer lad go skaten' round Swim Cutes, a-beaten' o' his drum ter show that th' ice ain't safe. He wor drownded

there—ice gave way when he wor skaten'—and th' owd folk's tale be that that be his ghost a-beaten' o' his drum. There he go agen," and the drumming sounded long and loud close under the wherry's bow.

Haddock-eye's one eye opened wide and shone with fear. Billy exclaimed, "Well! I'll be gormed; this ain't no place for this owd craft ter lay."

"Why, what on it?" asked Chubby. "Yer don't make believe as yer be afeard on it. That's narthen'."

"Let that be narthen', we'll get out o' this ter-night, that's a sure moral, blast me if it bain't," said Haddock-eye.

"Well, all I can say is yer a brace o' mure-hearted, duzzy owd fules if yer goin' ter imitate ter creep out o' haar ter-night. Th' wind's ongain for yer, all yer gear's froze, that be snowen' a rum un, and as dark as my owd 'oman's coal'us. Yer'll never see th' channel, and yer'll get onter ice and freeze up, maybe. Dew yer dew as I tell on yer, and dew yer stop where yer be, don't yer'll be inter wrong." Chubby emphasized his words with repeated blows of his fist on his thigh. "Mark my words on it, with yer wherry loaden up yer'll be in a pretty muddle by th' mornen' if yer makes a start on it ter-night."

"Well, that fare ter be likely we may freeze where we be," said Billy by way of argument.

"Th' channel will keep open yet, and yer can allus break yer way out if it dew freeze over, as long as yer can see th' way," was Chubby's answer.

"Well, I ha' got ter be a-goin'," he said presently as his eye fell on the almost empty bottle of rum. "If I set here much longer I shall get fused; that be a proper gude drop o' rum, but that 'on't dew ter ha' tew much on it, I finds. That be somethen' dark; shouldn't wonner if I makes a mess on it polen' home." Chubby climbed up on deck and carefully lowered himself into the punt. "If yer happen ter see an owd swan come floaten' by," he called out, "that be mine. I loosed off at seven early t' morning; I stung one up pretty tid'ly and downed it on Swim Cutes. She wor only winged, I fancy. I chased her for an hour, but they Hooper swan be cunnen' warmin; maybe yer may happen on her in th' morning. Well, gude night tergether. If I happens ter get nigh th' drummer I'll ask him ter stop tormenten' on yer." And with these words Chubby stuck his quant against the

side of the wherry, gave a push off, and was lost in the darkness.

"Be ye afeard, Biller?" whispered Haddock-eye as the two old men returned to the cabin.

"No, I ain't exactly afeard, but I ha' knowed th' time when I ha' liked myself better than I dew now. But seem as how we ha' got ter stay here, so there 't be."

"Ah! bor!" went on Haddock-eye, "I allus thinks o' my poor father a-peelen' o' his onion when I gets a crib o' this kind!" The old man began to sniff. "Yer don't fare ter smell onion, dew yer? fancy I dew," he remarked.

"I can smell a drop more rum, bor," was the reply. "Dew yer give over a-mardlen' on about yer father, that make me feel all o' a malt."

Billy's voice was getting thick and husky; in fact both men were beginning to feel the effects of the rum.

"There be th' noise agen. Gawd's truth, listen! I believe that there drummer be a-comen' aboard on us. Don't yer open th' door, yer duzzy fule," Haddock-eye cried out in alarm.

"I be a-goin' ter ha' a look out," and so saying Billy put his head and shoulders above the hatch. There was but an apology for a moon, whose feeble rays from time to time penetrated the snow-clouds and threw faint light on objects twenty yards ahead; then the snow would come down faster and all be dark again. At long intervals the burring noise made itself heard above the wind.

"Haddocky, for Gawd's sake, look ye haar," shouted Billy, in tones of extreme terror. "Dang me, if there bain't somethen' keep goin' back'ards and for'ards in front on our bow. I can't make narthen on it, dew yer look haar."

Trembling all over, Haddock-eye joined his partner. "Wait till th' mune come agen—there, there 't be," and in front of the wherry a blurred mass passed silently round and round, describing a large circle.

"Sakes alive! that's him, right enow," cried Haddock-eye, and his knees trembled under him.

"That ain't big enow for th' man," said Billy.

"He worn't a man; he wor a boy, right a small boy, I tells yer!"

A cloud covered the moon and the object was lost to view. but at that moment there was a drub, drub, b-u-r-r, b-u-r-r,

close to the old craft's sides. The men tumbled into the cabin, slammed and bolted the doors, and there they crouched, shaking with fear, not daring to speak above a whisper.

"Oh! Gude Heavens, now th' lamp's a-goin' out, and we hain't got a drop more ile aboard."

In a few minutes the lamp gave an expiring splutter and gradually faded out, only the uncertain light of the fire remained. The wind howled and moaned down the stove-pipe, and lumps of snow kept falling from the mast and cordage of the wherry on to the deck with soft, dull thuds.

"Dang me! he be aboard us," cried Haddock-eye, as a lump of snow hit the deck with more than ordinary violence. The old man grasped the bottle of rum and poured its contents down his throat. Before long Breezy Billy and Haddock-eye rolled off their bunks on to the cabin floor, speechless and stupefied with drink and fear.

"Dang me, there lay my swan right agen' th' owd wherry," said Chubby as in the gray morning light he poled his punt through the broken lumps of ice. "Well, yer a rum un and no mistake," he went on with difficulty pulling the huge bird into the punt. "Here, Biller! What, ain't yer tarned out tergether, lazy owd warmens? I'll wake on yer." He banged on the deck with his quant, but his efforts failed of success. "Be yer dead; haar, let's ha' a look on yer," and he peered through the little oval cabin window. What he saw was two old men lying on the floor of the cabin, one clasping in his hand a glass, the other an empty bottle, both snoring loudly. "Well! yer fare ter be proper comfortable, yer dew," he exclaimed; "but, there, I hain't th' time ter stop arter yer now; that don't sinnify ter me how long yer lay. Yer be proper duzzy owd fules," and Chubby stepped over his punt and poled himself across the broad.

Two days passed before the Armine and Althea again took up her moorings at the end of the bowling-green wall. Haddock-eye and Breezy Billy woke late in the morning after their fright, and as there was a head wind they only reached Acle Bridge by night. Several wherries were lying at the bridge, so they stopped for company, and it was mid-day on the third day of their voyage before Silky Smith, who was keeping a look-out, saw the old wherry coming up the North End.

"Well!" he shouted, when the men got within hearing distance, "what sorter trip ha' yer had tergether?"

"Right mod'rate," came the reply from Billy, and both old men shook their heads. "Wonnerful ongain wind all th' way home; a lot o' slus' in her; she ha' been aletten' th' juice inter her somewheres for'ard. She be so down by her head she made a poor job on it comen' home, and me and my partner ha' been well-nigh skeared inter our graves."

"Now there yer are," said Silky, when he had heard the old men's strange experiences. "There yer are, what wor I a-tellen' on yer? Yer thought yerselves wonnerful clarver; fare ter me yer 'on't think so much o' yer owd wherry now." Haddock-eye and Billy turned silently away, to seek consolation in the bar parlor.

Silky began talking to himself. "Yer be proper skeared now, and I thinks I can kinder finish yer off tergether!" He looked about him and picked up a piece of a broken herring-box. "This'll sarvę th' purpose, I reckon," was his comment as he took a large clasp-knife from his pocket and began to hack the wood. In ten minutes or so he had succeeded in cutting out a couple of rough drumsticks, then, finding a piece of glass, he scraped them smooth, and rubbed them in the dirt till they acquired the desired appearance of age. Climbing over the wall, he slipped down on to the wherry, and, lifting the forepeak hatch, threw them on the floor. With a chuckle he made his way back to the bar where the dejected old men were sitting.

"Well, this be th' rummiest go I ever did hear tell on," he said as he stood opposite the partners. "I made so bold ter go down yer forepeak ter see if I could find where she wor taken th' juice inter her, and I comed on something in there as made me feel all over creeps; dew yer come and ha' a look."

The old men followed him on to the wherry, and Silky Smith let himself down into the forepeak and picked up and handed a drumstick to each of the men. They gazed at them in astonishment, then dropped them as if they had been hot iron. Haddock-eye was the first to speak:

"There! I could ha' calred ter Gawd I heerd him come aboard. Dang me, this be th' proof on it."

"Well, what dew yer think on her now?" asked Silky.

"Think on her! That don't take no thinken , bor. We had made up our minds ter get out on her afore this, but this here

job that kinder settle it. We'll sell her," said Haddock-eye resolutely.

"Ah, now yer talken' sense tergether; but th' question be, 'Who'll buy her?'" said Silky, with a leer of malice. "If this here job get noised about no one'll want ter ha' narthen' ter dew with her. Look yer here; if yer likes ter take it in monthly payments I'll buy her, though that's agen my larnen'. I'll give ten pound for her, and yer won't lose a sight then, as yer ha' boated t'ree cargo o' ice down. I know I'm a fule ter offer it; but there 'tis if yer ha' a mind ter take it.

After a whispered conversation, which did not last many seconds, Haddock-eye and Breezy Billy nodded their heads and said:

"Hand on it, bor, hand on it; she be yourn when we ha' got her unloaden."

"There!" said Silky mournfully, "I knowed yer'd ha' me; dang me, if I bain't a duzzy fule. But that's no matters; let's go and ha' a drop ter wet th' bargain, and I'll lend yer a hand ter help clear her."

By the evening the Armine and Althea was unloaded, and was once more rubbing her sides against the slimy wall, all unmindful of the change of masters. Silky Smith, with a lantern, was carefully examining her hold, and he exclaimed to himself as he finished the survey:

"Well, for an owd wherry yer a pretty tidy one, worth every bit o' twenty pound, that's a sure moral, and I an't goin' ter lay no money out on yer neither. But yer ha' changed yer name sev'ral times in yer day, and I ha' a mind ter change it for yer agen: I'll run ter a bit o' paint for that, blast me,if I 'on't. But what fuse is me whether ter call yer 'Th' Drummer o' Hicklen'' or 'Th' Tew Duzzy Owd Fules'; dang me, if I fare ter know—I'll think it over."

# N Unofficial Strike: The Story of a Domestic Rebellion, by Una Hudson*

DENNIS MURPHY banged his dinner bucket down on the kitchen table.

"The strike is on," he said. And he looked hard at Maggie, his wife, for she had a most unreasonable habit of saying disagreeable things when the men were ordered out, and the rent was overdue, and there was no money to satisfy the demands of butcher and grocer.

But then Maggie was a woman and could hardly be expected to appreciate the manifold advantages of belonging to the Union. She scowled fiercely over the sum of money that Dennis turned into the Union's treasury every pay day, and in moments of extreme irritation she had even been known to calculate the pounds of meat and potatoes that the money would buy. And she had hinted more than once that, but for the Union, she could live like a lady and hold up her head with the best of them. As it was she took in washing to fill up the gap in the weekly income.

"An' what's the trouble now?" she asked with considerable asperity.

Dennis shuffled his feet uneasily.

"We want an eight-hour day," he mumbled. Maggie ironed a towel with short vicious strokes of her flat iron, and Dennis wished that the silver-tongued agitator who had ordered the strike could be there to convince her of the justness of their cause. She was so obviously in a bad humor and not inclined to listen to reason.

*Written for Short Stories.

"An' is it eight hours ye want?" she cried, emphasizing her words with thumps of her iron. "Eight hours work for a strappin' big man like yerself, Dennis Murphy! It's lazy ye are. An' them Unions has too many grievances altogether, that they have." Which was not at all a nice speech for the wife of a loyal Union man to make.

"Eight hours work is enough for any man," Dennis protested.

"An' for any woman? How about the women, just answer me that, Dennis Murphy?"

And Dennis thoughtlessly conceded that a woman should not work longer than eight hours a day. Whereat Maggie smiled a calm, wise smile that should have warned him of trouble ahead.

"An' what'll we live on the time the strike's on?" It was a question Maggie had often asked in the eight years of her married life, and she well knew Dennis' answer, for it had never varied.

"Sure and ye won't mind takin' in a bit of extry washin', Maggie, darlin', just to help us along till I do be earnin' money agin."

Maggie thought she minded very much indeed, but she held her peace. And the next morning Dennis noted with great satisfaction that the wash boiler stood on the back of the stove and Maggie seemed to be making preparations for a large day's work.

"Sure and I'll not begin till ye're out of the house, Dennis," she said. "The steam do be so onpleasant."

And Dennis, as he went off to discuss matters with his fellow strikers, reflected that if all other wives accepted the situation in as proper a spirit as Maggie did the strike was like to be a huge success.

Maggie marshaled Maggie and young Dennis and the baby into the kitchen.

"The strike is on," she announced, "an' it's a bath ye'll be after havin'."

And the children gasped, for "strike" they understood, but to their unaccustomed ears "bath" had a most terrifying sound. And their mother's preparations filled their small souls with dread, for she half filled the big wash tub with water, hot and cold, and she laid violent hands upon her offspring and stripped them of their clothes.

"An' it's drownded we'll be," Molly wailed in terror, as she began to comprehend her mother's intentions concerning them.

"Sure," said Maggie in deep disgust, "an' it's ignorant little brats ye are not to know a bath when ye see one. There do be people as takes one ivery day.

And from sheer inability to answer so astounding a statement the children were quiet while their mother soaped and scrubbed and rubbed and, for lack of a bath towel, stood them to dry before the kitchen stove. And she combed their hair, not in the sketchy, every-day way, but with a thoroughness that brought tears to their eyes. Then, wonderful to relate, she sewed the rent in Molly's frock and darned the knees of Dennis' stockings and replaced missing buttons.

"Now be off wid ye," she said. "For once ye'll go to school lookin' as ye should."

Then she picked up the baby from the kitchen floor. "Ye'll not play in the coal-scuttle *this* day," she said with emphasis, and she put a clean starched dress on the protesting child and put him in a big clothes basket, with an empty spool for a plaything.

She looked at the clock and her sides shook with silent laughter. "Eight hours for work," she said, "an' two of them gone already. I'll have to hurry a bit or I won't get through, and it's against the rules of me Union to work overtime."

Late in the afternoon Dennis betook himself homeward. His house had a strangely unfamiliar look for there were no clothes drying in the back yard and Maggie was not on the mite of a back porch bending over the wash tub.

Dennis opened the kitchen door with a strange sinking at his heart; he feared Maggie must be sick. Within, the fire burned brightly and the floor and table were scrubbed to the last degree of whiteness, but Maggie was nowhere visible. He tiptoed softly through the bedroom which was in a like state of immaculate neatness, and on the threshold of the little parlor he paused, his mouth falling open in astonishment. For Maggie sat in the rocking chair and her usually busy hands were folded idly in her lap. A bit of bright colored ribbon was twisted in her hair, and in her freshly ironed blue dress and starched white apron she presented so festive an appearance that involuntarily Dennis cast his

eyes over the room in search of the company he felt sure must be somewhere concealed. But he saw only Molly and young Dennis, awed into unaccustomed good behavior and sitting stiffly on the hard little sofa with the baby between them.

Maggie greeted him beamingly.

"Sure, and I'm on a strike meself," she explained. "It's eight hours I want, an' I'll do no more washing, savin' yer own and the bits o' things for the children."

Dennis slumped weakly into a chair. "It's not eight hours work ye've done *this* day, Maggie Murphy," he protested.

"Indade then an' it is," Maggie insisted. "I cooked yer breakfast, Dennis, and I gave the children a bath—"

"Ye're never after callin' that *work*, Maggie darlin'," Dennis objected in a tone of deep disgust.

"Indade and it was *hard* work," Maggie protested, and the three on the sofa nodded a vigorous assent.

Dennis abandoned the argument.

"I'm after wonderin' where the money's to come from while the strike's on," he said gloomily. Maggie rocked placidly, and smoothed out the creases in her apron.

"There's enough money put by to last out the week," she said. "An' belike by that time the strike will be off."

But Dennis knew that she referred to the official strike, and his heart was heavy within him.

Three days went by and the official strike was still on; the unofficial one ditto.

"Sure an' it's a grand thing to only work eight hours," Maggie said. "I don't blame ye for strikin', Dennis. An' with the washin' off my hands I feel that aisy and rested like. An' I've plenty of time to see to the children. They do be the cleanest in the block these days."

But Dennis scowled fiercely, for the question of money was becoming a serious one, and the strike wore upon his nerves.

"Nine hours work ain't too much for a man," he muttered, "no, nor ten, neither." And Maggie knew that she had scored a point.

The next day Dennis became diplomatic. "It does me heart good to see ye these days, Maggie darlin'; ye're lookin' so foine an' rosy like. But I am wonderin' how it'll be when

the money's all gone and ye'll have to stop atin'. Yer good looks will all be leavin' ye then, Maggie darlin'."

"Sure an' me good looks is all owin' to the rest that I'm after havin'," Maggie replied with spirit. "An' if I must give up the food that I'm atin' or the rest that I'm havin', it's the food I'll be after goin' without, Dennis Murphy."

And Dennis realized that the unofficial strike had come to stay.

At supper the next day Maggie served generous helpings of savory stew.

"Sure an' ye must ate all ye can," she said, "for now the money do be all gone an' there's nothin' left for the mornin' but some bread an' cold pertatoes."

"An' it's the hard-hearted woman ye are, Maggie Murphy, to sit by and see yer children go hungry when ye might aisy be earnin' money by takin' in a bit of washin'."

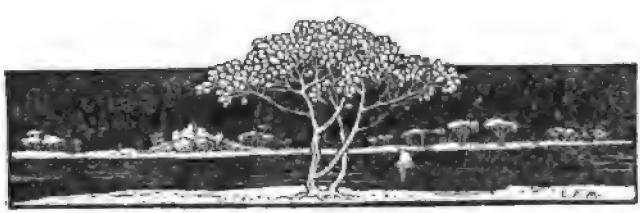
"Sure an' they're yer children, too, Dennis Murphy," Maggie flung back. "An' it's your place to be earnin' money. I'll cook for them an' wash their bits of clothes an' look after them good and faithful, but not a finger will I ever lift again to earn money."

And that night Dennis went heavy-hearted to bed, for he knew that the unofficial strike had won.

"Hurry up wid me breakfast, Maggie darlin'," he said the next morning. "I'm after goin' back to me work this mornin'. An' I'll lave the Union, bad cess to them. Sure, an' it's lowerin' to a man's dignity to be ordered 'round by them Unions. I'll not be standin' it no more."

"Ye're a foine man, Dennis, that ye are, an' it's meself that's proud of ye this day," Maggie said.

And Dennis felt that he had chosen well.



# FEAR: A Traveler's Stories of the Supernatural, by Guy de Maupassant; Translated from the French by Eugénie Norwood.*

DINNER ended, we assembled on deck. Before us stretched the Mediterranean, without a ripple, enveloped in the soft light of the moon. Our mighty ship cast a large serpent of black smoke on star sprinkled sky, and the white water, agitated by the quick movement of our heavy boat, foamed and frothed, created so many lights that one would have said the sea was on fire. We were there, six or eight of us—silent—admiring—our eyes turned toward distant Africa, whither we were bound.

The Commander, who smoked a cigar in our midst, took up the conversation begun at dinner.

"Yes," he said. "I experienced fear that day. My ship was tossed about for six hours with a rock in her belly. Happily we were rescued towards evening by an English coal ship which sighted us."

At this point a large man, with a bronzed, serious face, spoke for the first time. He was one of those men who gives the impression of having roamed through immense and unknown countries, in the midst of unceasing dangers, and whose tranquil eyes seem to hold in their depths something of the strange sights they have seen. A man imbued with courage.

"You say, Commander, that you felt fear? I do not believe it. You misuse the word. An energetic man never experiences fear in the face of immediate danger. He is troubled, excited, worried; but fear, that is quite another thing."

*Translated for Short Stories.

The Commander replied laughingly:

"Nevertheless, I promise you I was afraid."

The bronzed-face man said slowly: "Let me explain myself. Fear (and the most courageous man can experience it) is something horrible, a terrible sensation, a decomposition of the soul, a spasm in the thought and in the heart, even the remembrance of which causes agonizing shivers. But this never happens to the brave, either in attack or in the face of inevitable death, or in the presence of any real tangible known danger. It only happens under certain abnormal conditions. Real fear is something like a reminiscence of old fantastic terrors. A man who believes in spirits and who imagines he sees a ghost in the night must feel fear in all its horrors. I felt fear in the middle of the day about ten years ago. I felt the effect of it last winter, one December night. I have often fought. I have been left for dead by robbers. I was condemned as a rebel and was pitched into the sea in China. Each time I thought myself lost. I accepted my fate without trouble, without regret. But fear is another thing. I had a presentiment of it in Africa. Yet Africa is the daughter of the north. There the sun disperses hanging shadows like a mist. Notice well this, Messieurs. To the Orientals life counts as nothing. They are immediately resigned in case of danger. Panics are common, but fear is unknown. Well, here is what happened to me in Africa. I was crossing the desert south of Onargla. It is one of the strangest countries in the world. You know the appearance of the shores of sand along the boundless sea. Picture to yourself the sea itself changed into sand, and imagine a silent storm of waves of sand and yellow dust. These waves are as high as mountains, uneven, rising up just as the waves of the sea, but a hundred times larger.

"On this raging, silent sea, without actual movement, the devouring sun of the South pours down its implacable and direct rays. You climb up the hills of gold dust, climb down again and remount. Then again climb, climb, climb, without ceasing, without rest, without shade. The horses fume, rear, sink down to their knees.

"We were two friends traveling together followed by Arabs and four camels, with their drivers. We no longer spoke, overcome by the heat and fatigue and parched with thirst as the desert. Suddenly one of our men broke into a horrible cry,

We stopped, and stood petrified, surprised by the inexplicable phenomenon, well known to the travelers of that hopeless country.

"Somewhere near us, in an unknown direction, we heard the beating of a drum—the mysterious drum of the hills. The sound was sometimes clear and loud, sometimes weak and halting—then again beginning to beat fantastically. The Arabs, terrified, looked at each other, then one said in Arabian 'Death is upon us.' Suddenly, my comrade, my friend, almost my brother, fell from his horse, his head sank in his chest and his body became rigid. For two hours while I was trying in vain to revive him, this drum kept up its monotonous incomprehensible noise, and I felt in my very bones the sensation of fear—real fear, hideous, unreasoning—in face of this corpse of a loved one—in this horrible, unearthly hole between four mountains of sand, burnt up with the sun—while the unknown echo kept repeating the quick beating of the unknown drum. That day I knew what it meant to fear— I have even had a greater experience of it since."

The Commander interrupted.

"Pardon me, Monsieur, but the drum, what was it?"

The traveler answered: "I do not know—no one knows. Travelers are often surprised by the strange sound, they attribute it to the echo, exaggerated, multiplied, swollen by the valleys of the sand hills, and caused by particles of sand striking violently against a species of dried grass, for it has always been noticed that this phenomenon takes place in the neighborhood of this little plant—burnt by the sun and hard like parchment. The drumming is probably nothing else but a sort of mirage of sound. That is all. But I did not learn this till later."

"I will tell you my other occasion for fear. It happened last winter in a forest in the north of France. Night fell on us two hours earlier than usual. The sky looked black and angry. I had a peasant for my guide; he walked beside me along a little path under the groaning swinging pines. You could almost see the clouds of wind, breaking and tearing everything in their way, wild, hopeless clouds which rushed ahead of us with rage. Once in a while a tremendous gale seemed about to tear the forest up, and it bent with groans of suffering. I was penetrated by the cold notwithstanding my heavy clothing and quick walking. We were to dine

and sleep at the house of one of the foresters. I was going there to hunt. My guide once in a while looked up and muttered 'Bad weather.' Then he told me of the people with whom we were to sojourn. The father had murdered a wood chopper two years previous, and since then he was morose, as though haunted with the remembrance of it. His two married sons lived with him. We still had some distance to go, the darkness was profound, I could see nothing in front of me, and the branches of the trees knocking against each other, filled the night with unearthly sound. Finally I perceived a light, and soon my companion knocked at a door.

"Piercing cries coming from women responded to our knock. Then a half smothered voice of a man asked. 'Who is it?' My guide gave his name, and we entered—then we witnessed a strange sight. An old white-haired man, with the wild eye of a maniac, a loaded gun in his hand, awaited our entrance in the kitchen, while two immense fellows armed with axes kept watch by the door. I could see in the dark the kneeling figures of two women, their faces hidden against the wall. They gave an explanation. The old man put his gun down, and ordered the women to prepare my room. As they did not move, he addressed me abruptly.

"'You see, Monsieur, I killed my man this very night two years ago. Last year he returned here and called me. I await him again to-night," he added in a manner that made me smile, "We are a little bit upset.'"

"I did my best to quiet them, glad that I happened that night and would be able to witness the superstitious fear of these people. I told them story after story. Near the fire place lay an old, half-blind dog. Outside the mad tempest raged, shaking the little house. I looked out of a small peep hole, near the door, and saw by the sudden glare of the lightning the trees bending in two. Notwithstanding my efforts to keep cool, I felt myself possessed of the wild terror that cowered the others. Whenever I stopped talking they sat up, listening breathlessly.

"Weary of watching their stupid fears, I was about to bid them good-night and retire for sleep, when the old man made a leap from his chair, seized his gun, stuttering in a broken voice:

"'There he is—there he is. I hear him.'"

"The women fell on their knees and buried their heads in their hands, and the sons took up their axes. The dog awoke, sat up, pricked up his ears, stretched his neck, and let forth a long, continued, uncanny howl. We all turned our eyes on him. He remained motionless, as though contemplating a vision. His hair stood on end, foam came to his mouth and he uttered the most terrifying yells conceivable. He seemed to see something invisible. The old man, livid with terror, whispered:

"'He knows the scent. He knows it—he was there when I killed him!'

"The wretched women began to groan in the same hideous fashion as the dog.

"I felt a cold perspiration break out all over my body, and shivers ran up and down my spine. The sound of the wind, the sight of this mad, howling dog and frantic people was really harrowing.

"For an hour the dog kept up his noise without intermission; he moaned and cried as if in agony. Fear, the most overpowering fear, took possession of me. Fear of what? I knew not. It was simply paralyzing, unreasoning fear. that was all.

"We remained immovable, listening, our hearts thumping, upset at the least sound, expecting something which seemed to come nearer and nearer. Then the dog rose, walked about the room smelling the walls and uttering groans and howls. This animal drove us wild. Suddenly my guide, with a sort of paroxysm of terror, grabbed him, opened the door and threw him out into the fearful dark. Then he sank back half dead. None of us moved, terrified even more than before. Suddenly, like an electric shock, we all felt a sort of trembling pass through us. Something glided against the outside wall, toward the forest. It passed the door, at which it seemed to feel hesitatingly; then again all was silence, such a silence as to make you lose your very mind. Again it returned, rubbed against the walls, scratching as a child might do with its nail.

"At this moment a head appeared at the peephole—a white head with blazing eyes, like a wild animal's. We heard a long pitiful, indistinct sound, like an agonized whisper, then were deafened by a sharp report. The old man had pulled the trigger of his gun. Immediately the sons precipitated

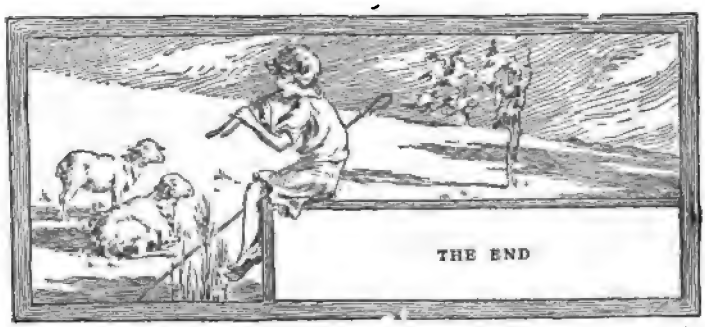
themselves on the door, stopped up the peephole by overturning the table against it, and sank down behind it themselves. I swear to you that at the noise of that gun, which I was not prepared for, I experienced such anguish of mind, of heart, soul and body, that I felt as though I were about to die.

"We remained there until daylight, unable to move or to speak a word—doubled up and half insane with terror. We dared not open the door until the rays of the sun came through the cracks.

"At the foot of the wall against the door lay the old dog —dead—the jaw broken by a bullet."

The speaker stopped—then added:

"That night I was in absolutely no danger, but I would rather have to face all the perils of war, of actual death, than to endure again for a single second, the sensation of fear that overpowered me when the old man's bullet went through the peephole and shot his miserable dog."



# BETWEEN Dances: By Sara Cone Bryant. Illustrations by Mabel L. Humphrey*

ANNE GREGORY sat in a corner of Frau Baumgarten's library listening to the snatches of talk and music which penetrated the heavy draperies between her retreat and the salon, and enjoying the moment's stolen respite from social duties all the more for her uncertainty as to how long it would last. Through the small gap in the portière she caught fugitive glimpses of passing guests. One tall, square-shouldered, in the Prussian uniform, paused briefly, just in view. Two charming English girls passed, and then a second tall man's figure, in evening clothes.

*Written for Short Stories.

The two men stayed in clear and involuntary juxtaposition before the girl's mental vision. And since girls' thoughts are not always so carefully edited as girls' speech, this is what she said to herself, musing on certain memories:

"How very much alike they are—and how very different. What makes them so different? Jack is a little, just a *little* taller; and Herr von Hammerstein is a little squarer—at least Jack's waist doesn't go in that way. The lieutenant's hair is yellower; they both have blue eyes; but Jack's are grayer, and deeper-set. He hasn't so much color—except once in a while, that is. And his face is leaner—the lieutenant's big blonde moustache makes a difference too; I don't know what his mouth would be like if you could see it; Jack's is awfully pleasant when he talks. No, I suppose there's no question but that Herr von Hammerstein is the handsomer; but—somehow—Jack's face has a kind of a *dear* look. I wonder which is nicer? Which do I like better? Of course I would trust Jack quicker—after all these years; indeed I'd trust Jack with anything, he's that sort. Somehow I don't believe Herr von Hammerstein could be just the kind of a friend to a girl Jack's been to me. But considered as a—well, not as a friend? Jack isn't so—so exciting, as the other one. I guess he isn't so intense; I suppose that is because he has known me so long, and isn't a bit in love with me—though he was once, I think, just a tiny bit—whereas the lieutenant—well—but I'm very fond of Jack; he is so comfortable to have round. I wonder if the lieutenant would always be comfortable to have round? Or, I wonder what Jack would be like if he weren't quite—so much so. But of course I wouldn't like him any different, of *course* not. Only, well—I wonder—?"

And then the draperies were gently pushed aside, and Mr. John Durham came quietly in through the opening.

"You'd much better go away, Jack," the girl murmured lazily.

"Thanks, awfully," was the cheerful response, "since you are so pressing, I will stay a bit." And he proceeded to settle himself on a chair arm opposite the window-seat where Anne had curled herself up.

"You must be very uncomfortable," she added casually, as she watched him.

"Oh, no, I'm very well placed, thanks." He leaned

forward, balancing himself neatly, and looked at the violets the girl was wearing. "What made you hide?" he asked coolly. "Von Hammerstein is raging visibly, in the midst of social delights."

"Raging?" Anne's eyebrows were ingenuousness itself, but she blushed slightly. "How very inconsiderate of him! I suppose he misses his beer; don't you?"

"He certainly seemed to miss something."

"Dear, dear, that wasn't very nice of him," shaking her head regretfully; "I'm afraid these Germans are very hard to suit."

"Think so, Anne? Don't you think they seem to like about the same—things—as the rest of us?"

"I don't like beer; speak for yourself."

Mr. Durham's eyes smiled, but his lips permitted themselves no such encouragement. "Queen Anne," he said softly, "you are an awful f—"

"What's that?" interrupting sharply. "I'm no such thing."

"No what thing?"

"No—no what you were going to say!"

"Oh, I was merely about to remark that you were an awful fraud sometimes," said Jack mildly.

Anne tapped her foot on the wooden edge of the window-seat; finally she laughed. Mr. Durham looked gently surprised. Then his face grew quite serious. "Do you like these Germans, Anne?" he said.

"Too abstract. Make it concrete, Jackie, and I'll tell you."

"Well, Von Hammerstein, for instance?"

"Certainly I do," promptly; "don't you?"

"I don't think I know him quite as well as you do."

"If you did, you would," said Anne, enthusiastically. "He is—so interesting."

Out of the corner of her eye she observed that her enthusiasm awakened no response.

When Jack spoke it was on another subject, though not unconnected with the former: "Pretty swell violets you have on," he said. "Made in Germany?"

"Yes," touching them softly; "wearing violets is like a bit of old times, isn't it?"

Jack flushed, throwing a keen glance at her. "Is the prohibition still on, Anne?" he asked, after a moment.

"The prohibition?"

"High tariff on floral offerings, you know—restrictive laws, etc.?"

"Oh!" This time Anne flushed; then she laughed. "Yes, it is still on; much you mind, though! The law read, 'not oftener than once in two weeks,' didn't it? And the Embassy ball and Mrs. Herford's dance weren't two weeks apart, on my calendar."

"Don't you like them any more?"

"Oh, it isn't a question of *liking*—what did you say? Then don't mutter, it's bad manners—as I was saying, you oughtn't to waste your substance in such riotous living, sending violets to people."

"But I only send them to one person, and very seldom since she put her terrible little foot down."

"I wonder if you mean 'terribly little'? No? Oh, all right, it's quite the same thing. But seriously, Jack; you are altogether too kind to me about flowers and those things; you can't keep it up forever, you know."

"Why not?" quietly.

"Why because, because it is just a bad habit! You began it in our schooldays, when I was taking special work out at the college—do you remember—and you've never stopped."

"Well, as I said before, why not, Anne?"

"Why, for a dozen reasons, Jack; it was all very well for two infants, but life is serious nowadays."

"I quite agree with you there."

"You know, Jack," hurriedly, "I don't mean we aren't just as good friends as ever. I'm just the same, and I know you would bail me out if I got into trouble with the Polizei; but things are so different over here. Why, Jack, what do you suppose Frau Baumgarten would think—and all the girls in the house—if you sent things every other day, the way you used to?"

"I think," calmly, "they would have the very good sense to think the truth."

"Oh no, they wouldn't," triumphantly, "not a bit of it! You don't know this gossip factory; they would think—all sorts of things that aren't at all true."

"What, for instance?"

"Lots of things; never mind; anyway, you had got into a little habit of letting me monopolize everything, Jack, and that is what I meant when I told you not to send so many flowers."

"I see," slowly. "You mean that I have monopolized you—long enough?"

"Oh, picking quarrels! And all about a paltry violet or two?"

"No, not about that, Anne; but why do you distinguish against the home product?"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean, am I the only man who isn't allowed to send you violets? You are wearing some to-night."

"Why, Jack!—Jack, don't you see, you are the only man I know well enough to—well—to advise for his own good?"

"So? It is sometimes a disadvantage to be an old friend, isn't it?"

"Perhaps," very stiffly, "it had not occurred to me till you suggested it."

"No? It has occurred to me, often."

"May I ask under what particular disadvantages you have been laboring?" Anne's tone was unmistakable. The man looked at her.

"It would be the pleasure of my life," he said, very gravely, "to expound to you those peculiar difficulties which have attended and impeded the course of my procedure during—"

"Jack Durham—of all the outrageous mockers—I didn't speak like that really—did I?"

"Well, " smiling down at her, "there was a slight atmosphere about you, Anne, dimly reminiscent of dear old Boston on a nice cool January day."

Anne's face wavered between resentment and guilty amusement; finally a reluctant smile crept toward the dimple in her left cheek, and she lifted reproachful eyes to his.

"Ah, Jackie, how mean you are!" she said, in a small voice she reserved for him. The man glanced at her quickly and looked down, the slow color creeping into his face at the half-caressing tone. She had always known one or two ways of diverting his teasing moods, and now she rejoiced maliciously in his discomfiture. "Was he a bad little boy? And did he love to say things he hadn't oughter?" she murmured, leaning toward him; and when he neither moved nor looked up a little

tricksy devil danced into each of the girl's gray eyes. She sat up on the window-seat and bent still more provokingly toward the downcast head. "A bad little boy, a sad little boy," she crooned, "a bad little, sad little—"

"Anne!" Her heart jumped with the startle of it. The voice was no more Jack's familiar voice than the stern white face was his face. For an instant they looked into each

other's eyes; hers wide and startled; his flashing, flooded with some rebellion and determination. Then he began to speak, quietly now, but still in the strange, new voice.

"You have called me a boy a good many times in the past, Anne," he said. "I am not a boy. The time has come when you must understand that."

Something in the low repressed tones hurried the girl's heart-beats and made it hard to hold her eyes level on his. She found her eyes dropping till she could see nothing but her own tightly clasped hands; at that she was both angry and ashamed; it had never happened to her before. She tried to murmur something about its being "only a joke, Jack," but her voice behaved so absurdly that she hoped he didn't hear; he certainly paid no attention.

"It means something to me," she heard him saying, "that you should not think of me as a boy. I find I can't stand it any longer. Anne, will you look at me, please?"

Anne's ears were full of pounding noises, and her heart was doing uncomfortable things all out of due locality; as for looking at him!—she realized suddenly that she was afraid to look. Then she considered; afraid of Jack—*Jack?* That was plainly ridiculous. She would not yield to such folly; she would look at him coolly and say, "Well?" But she did not. And then through the pounding the voice came again, still lower, but with a quite incomprehensible authority in it; "Look at me, Anne!"

He had not moved, but it seemed to her that he had taken her face in his two hands and was lifting it; and the rebellious eyes followed the same imperious power. A long minute she looked with eyes that could not escape the passionate holding of his, while he gave her his soul to read as a man holds out his palm to a friend. And when the minute was over, the knowledge had crept through every fibre of her that the face was indeed not the face of a boy, but of a man. Things seen in faint reflection in other faces, things vaguely phrased and secretly wondered about, were written there in a flash that burned sudden comprehension into her mind. She caught her breath audibly, turning her head from him, as his voice, broken and hoarse, and so low that it was almost a whisper, fell on the charged silence:

"Queen Anne—my Queen!" he breathed.

The girl made a hasty, tremulous motion, slipping to her

feet, as if to escape some danger. The movement brought her gown against him, and both his hands closed round the one which hung at her side. The clasp was so unlike the friendly grasp of the hand she knew as Jack's that she thought she did not like it; a little gasp came from her lips with the incoherent words: "Oh, please—oh, don't, Jack; you make me very uncomfortable—I don't want—"

"I *must* speak, Anne. How long do you suppose a man can bear this sort of thing? If you have any mercy in you, tell me now."

"Tell—you—what?"

"Whether there is any hope for me or not. I have waited till I can't wait any longer, little girl; I've got to have you —or—lose you, now. If—Von Hammerstein—if I'm out of the running, for God's sake tell me so!"

The girl stopped trembling; her face lost some of the child-look of dismay and fright. With an effort she raised her eyes honestly to his, saying gently, though tremulously, "I can't tell you what I don't *know*, Jack; won't you give me a little time to find out?"

"Don't you know your own heart, child? After all these years? Oh, Anne, my little heart's queen, don't you know I've loved you always, with all there is of me?—you must love me a little, just a little, Anne? There must be some love in you for me—can't you tell, dear?"

"No!" desperately, "I can't. I am all mixed up. Jack, you aren't the same—nothing is the same—I don't know what I think."

"When will you know?" huskily.

"I—oh, some one is coming! Let me go, Jack!"

As he released her hand she slipped by him, and at the moment a louder chord from the piano sounded through the opening portière, and Von Hammerstein came into the room. He flushed and smiled with an air of satisfaction at sight of the slender, white figure. "Found at last, gnädiges Fräulein," he said, coming directly toward her, but including the other man in his salute. "You have been a truant."

Anne steadied herself to the instinctive rally every woman, old or young, makes when hard pressed. She managed to smile back, as she said: "And are you the truant-officer?"

"Gott bewahr," laughed the lieutenant, "I am not in the civil service. But you—they are playing a waltz—" as he

spoke his glance grew keen, passing from the girl to the man, then became carefully unobserving. He had paused, and Mr. Durham began to speak, quickly, but in an ordinary tone. So it happened that both men said, almost in unison.

"This was my dance, I think?" and

"May I have the honor?"

Then both stopped, and straightened involuntarily. The German flushed; the American was very pale. In a moment the lieutenant turned with an elaborate formality to the other man. "We are rivals," he said dramatically, and with a smile. "Will either of us withdraw?"

"Not unless you wish to," said the other, with the same courteous inflection, but gravely.

A gleam came into the lieutenant's blue eyes, and a direct look passed between the two. After that neither man looked at the other; each looked at the girl, and both spoke in the tone of accentuated lightness the lieutenant had used. The latter said, "We are in your hands, fair lady, which will you honor?"

"But, meine Herren," said Anne, with a touch of nervousness in her smile, "I cannot dance with you both at once; you surely will not put me to the discomfort of denying myself either pleasure?" But her questioning look met no sign of the expected withdrawal in either face. Instead, Jack spoke, his eyes meeting hers squarely, "It is too bad; but you see Von Hammerstein and I are such bitter 'rivals' that we insist on a decision from you."

"Precisely," assented the German, bowing; "we await your choice, gnädiges Fräulein."

A vivid flush sprang to the girl's cheeks. "I think I shall have to sit out this dance," she said, her head a little higher than it had been.

"Pardon me," interrupted Mr. Durham, quickly; "don't say you won't play, please. The object of this game is to choose your partner—and Lieutenant von Hammerstein and I are very anxious to play."

"Very," said the gentleman referred to.

Anne stood between them, every natural and tactful way of disposing of the trifling difficulty made impossible to her consciousness by the electric atmosphere of disguised earnestness and covered significance which emanated from the two. Everything seemed all at once to drop away from the world

leaving her alone with those two men, waiting for more than her answer to the insignificant claim. Without looking she saw every detail of each immaculate figure, one in the glamor of military associations, the other in the simple black and white of the civilian, which had also its charm of association.

"There are rules for every game," she said, slowly, her head bent, as she stood before them. "This one is usually decided according to priority, isn't it?" She heard Jack take a quick, hard breath; the lieutenant had really begun his little speech first. At the same time the latter bent toward her eagerly. "Did I not have the good fortune to precede Mr. Durham, very slightly?" he said, touching his moustache nervously. Anne moved uncertainly, waveringly, toward him. A light sprang to his eyes as he saw the little motion. "Are we to keep strictly to the *rules?*" he said, with a suppressed triumph in his light tone. "If so, I think Fräulein Gregory belongs to me!"

The girl started and lifted her head sharply. A strange expression flitted across her face. It looked as if she were listening inwardly. "What did you say?" she asked after a moment, very gravely and slowly.

The lieutenant smiled at her with more than a suggestion of claim in his glance. "I said you were *mine*—for the dance; nicht wahr?" he said, with just a hint of a lingering on the word before the pause.

As he said it, it seemed to the man who stood cold and tense with a dawning despair at her other side, that an electric shock ran along the girl's nerves. Her color came and went swiftly. Her eyes flashed open wide and startled. A moment she stood so, in silence, looking at the man who

had spoken. Then a sudden sweet little laugh ran from her lips; her face relaxed its tense lines, and she took a quick breath on the end of a slight shiver. With a swift, sure movement she drew slightly back and aside, so that she stood at Mr. Durham's side. "Oh no; I'm not," she said, with a happy security in her voice, "You are mistaken; I wasn't quite sure myself—before—but—I belong to Mr. Durham!"

And as Jack's hand closed eagerly over the one she laid on his arm, and his held breath released itself in a great sigh of passionate relief and joy, she turned to the other candidate with a gentle regret in her tender eyes.

"I am very sorry to seem unkind," she said; "but the fact is, Mr. Durham established his claim—a long while ago."

# A CHINESE Vendetta: A Tale of Retribution, by Hemingford Grey*

THE bed on which Li Sing was sleeping was a piece of matting spread on the floor, and a Chinese pillow the shape of a large brick, made of porcelain and colored green. As the clock struck six he woke up, stretched himself two or three times, yawned once or twice, and began to put the shop in order for the business of the day.

After rolling up his bed and packing it away under the counter, he sprinkled the floor with water and swept it vigorously with a small broom of coir. He then dusted and put straight the opium divan, arranged the pipes in their places on the tray, lit the little wick under the bell-shaped glass at which the pipes were lighted and the opium heated and softened, and filled the little horn phial with sufficient opium for the day's use. The many cuspidors scattered about the place had then to be emptied and half filled with fresh water, and the writing materials set in order on the counter.

Finally he attended to the little porcelain god which presided over the destinies of the shop from a niche in the wall duly ornamented with peacocks' feathers and little moral maxims in black or gilt characters on oblong strips of red paper. Before the niche stood a little bronze urn on three legs, filled with the ashes of numerous joss-sticks, and emitting a faint odor of sandal-wood. Into this he stuck three freshly lit joss-sticks, which rapidly began to smolder away, filling the shop with a pungent but not unpleasant odor of burning incense. Then the deity was propitiated for the day.

After taking a leisurely survey of the interior to see if everything was in order, he took from their sockets the six heavy

*From Chamber's Journal.

wooden bars which represented the door, and hung outside the long wooden signs which informed the public, in gilded characters on a red ground, of the flourishing business done by the shop and the numberless blessings in store for the lucky people who had dealings with it.

All this occupied some considerable time, as the morning was very hot, and the rest of the staff, who resided in the upper regions, did not usually put in an appearance till about eight o'clock. At that hour Li was free for an hour to go and take his rice in the bosom of his family, who lived in a little cubicle on the top floor of one of the poorer-class Chinese houses overlooking the river.

It was in one of the many narrow, tortuous streets of the ancient city of Canton that the "Chun on Hong," or "Shop of Ten Thousand Blessings," carried on a flourishing business as money-changers. The principal place of business was on the ground floor, a long room extending from the front to the back of the premises. In the front portion was the counter, on which stood the scales and various trays and baskets full of silver coins of different denominations; and a few blackwood and bamboo stools and a large round table for meals comprised the rest of the furniture. At the back was a small, dark room partitioned off by a lattice-work screen, where the bookkeepers pored over the pages of Chinese characters which represented the account books of the shop; and in front of this room was the opium divan. On the first floor was a sitting-room overlooking the street, also furnished with a round table and a number of square-backed, marble-seated blackwood chairs; and it was here that the staff and their friends retired at intervals to discuss the topics of the day with the help of Chinese tobacco inhaled in short whiffs through metal water-pipes. At the back of this sitting-room were four cubicles partly used as sleeping apartments and partly as private sitting-rooms. The top floor was partitioned off into numerous cubicles and cocklofts, carefully designed to exclude light and air as much as possible, where the eight or ten coolies who made up the staff talked, gambled, or slept away the hours they were not employed in the business premises below. Above this there was the tiled roof, on which stood a number of old wine-jars supposed to be filled with water for use in case of fire. As the water had long since evaporated from those which remained entire and uncracked, they would have

proved quite useless in the emergency against which they were presumed to be a safeguard.

Li, who was the shop-coolie and watchman, had hardly been waiting ten minutes before the staff made their appearance one by one; and, having seen them safely settled down to breakfast, he made the best of his way to his own home.

After finishing his meal and discussing with his wife the important question of whether or not she should adopt a daughter of about twelve years of age to look after the children and help in the house, Li returned to his duties at the shop, where he found a large sum of dollars done up in a bag of matting awaiting his arrival to be taken to a native bank and deposited there for safe custody.

With many grunts at its heaviness, he hoisted the bag on his shoulder and went out of the shop. His way lay through some of the narrowest and most crowded streets of the city, and he found himself pushed and jostled at every turn. He managed, however, to get along pretty rapidly at the usual dog-trot affected by coolies carrying heavy burdens, every now and then shouting to some one to get out of his way or abusing them for having got in it.

Li did not pay much attention to the passing crowd, his mind being chiefly occupied in enjoying in anticipation the feast which would take place after the death of his secondary grandmother—an event shortly anticipated, and for which considerable preparation had already been made. He was just speculating whether he could, without losing "face," make eighty *cash* (about twopence) represent the hundred he would be expected to subscribe on that occasion, when a man bumped violently into him, knocked him over, and, seizing the bag of dollars, ran rapidly with it up a by-street.

Li, rudely awakened from his pleasant speculations, quickly grasped the situation and gave chase to the thief. Having a considerable advantage in the weights, as the thief was now handicapped by the bag of money, Li gained rapidly on his quarry, enlivening the proceedings by shouting out, "Thief-man! thief-man!" at the top of his voice.

No one took any notice of the pursuit except to stop and watch the runners, the occurrence being a very common one, as the city was infested with thieves and robbers who plied their trade in armed bands or singly, as in the present instance.

Faster and faster sped the thief, but faster still sped Li after

him, until he was almost on the robber's heels, and near enough to recognize him as a man whom he had often seen loafing about the shop door. Hearing Li's feet clattering along in dangerous proximity behind him, the thief gave a hurried glance over his shoulder; and, realizing that something desperate must be done if he wished to escape with his booty, he pulled a revolver from his waist band and fired three shots in rapid succession into that portion of Li's anatomy where he had contemplated stowing a large portion of his secondary grandmother's funeral feast.

Poor Li, by this unexpected assault, was brought up with a round turn. Giving two or three convulsive yells, he dropped to the ground, shouted "Save life!" once or twice, and then collapsed into unconsciousness.

A crowd of curious idlers rapidly gathered round him and volubly speculated on the cause of the assault and the probability of Li's recovery, most of them expressing an opinion that Li must have been a very bad man or certainly no one would have shot him.

No attempt was made to render him assistance or revive him in any way. Apart from a national apathy toward such cases, all were afraid to help him lest they should bring trouble on themselves or be brought into touch with the local magistrate of the *yamen* runners, officials whom long experience had taught them were very apt at getting all their money, and very slow at giving any redress. So they stood still, speculating, being curious to see what Li would do when he recovered consciousness.

After an hour or an hour and a half Li recovered his senses sufficiently to state where he came from, and asked to be carried back to the shop.

No one seemed willing to undertake the job of carrying him there; but at last two decrepit old coolies, seeing something to be gained, and having certainly nothing to lose, bought a bampoo and some rope from a neighboring shop, which they paid for with the contents of Li's purse, and set about carrying him to the address he had given them. The method they adopted was a very simple one. Tying a piece of rope around Li's wrists and another round his ankles, they slipped the bamboo through the loops formed by the arms and legs, put the ends of the pole on their shoulders, and tottered off.

That there was any cause for haste never occurred to them. They staggered slowly along with their burden, occasionally stopping to buy a cup of tea; and far more frequently to rest. At last they reached their destination, and with little ceremony carried Li into the shop and dumped him down on the floor, where he lay again unconscious, and with every appearance of having already departed to join his ancestors.

To the inquiries made by the shop-people as to the cause of the accident, the coolies answered that they knew nothing except that they had found Li lying in the street, and had brought him there at his request, for which service they required a remuneration of one dollar apiece.

This gave rise to a long argument, in which each side maintained their views with great vigor and loudness, and illustrated them with copious gesticulation. The shop-people said Li was only a coolie, and had very likely brought the trouble on himself; and, anyhow, he had lost their bag of money, and probably fully deserved all he had got. They even dimly hinted that the coolies themselves were interested in the theft, and made allusions to the magistrate and the pleasures of the *cangue*.

The coolies, nothing daunted, gave back quite as good as they received; said Li must have been an important coolie to have been entrusted with so much money; and threatened the shop with the anger of the Coolie Guild, a powerful and widely dreaded body.

At last, just as things were reaching a crisis, one or two friendly bystanders intervened, and, by dint of "talking peace" for some time, persuaded the parties to come to an amicable settlement. The shop was to pay the coolies seventy-five cents each, and they were to carry Li to his own home.

When the money had been duly paid over, counted and tested, the coolies with great unconcern lifted Li with their bamboo as before, and staggered away again on their farther journey. Half an hour more of tottering brought them to the foot of the stairs leading to the little cubicle overlooking the river. With much difficulty and a great deal of chattering Li was hoisted on the back of the least decrepit of the two; and so, carried in front and pushed behind, severely wounded, bleeding and unconscious, he returned to his wife and his home.

After laying Li down on the floor and untying his wrists and ankles the coolies went their way, merely telling Mrs. Li that the shop-people had told them to bring him here.

Mrs. Li was a woman who possessed in a minor degree, many of those strong-minded and vigorous qualities which several times in the history of China have raised one of her sex to the throne and to power unlimited. She wasted no time in useless waiting, but at once tried to restore her husband to consciousness. Finding that violently slapping his hands and loudly calling his name had no effect, she took a couple of *cash*, and began to carry out a series of pinching operations with them along the fleshy part of his arm, with the object of seeing if he had any sense of feeling left. Under this vigorous treatment Li gradually began to show signs of life and eventually recovered sufficiently to ask for some tea, which his wife handed to him. She then questioned him about the cause of his accident; and Li, with a good deal of effort, gathered together his senses and gave her a pretty clear account of what had taken place. Having done this, and told her of his assailant's home and where he belonged to, Li laid the strongest injunctions on her to have the thief brought to justice at all costs, and dwelt on the obloquy which would be cast on his ancestors and his descendants if the thief were allowed to escape unpunished. Comforted by her assurance that she would do everything in her power to bring this about Li's spirit flew to his ancestors, and Mrs. Li found herself left a widow with three children to support and a mission of vengeance to fulfill.

The first thing to be done was to lay out the corpse in a corner of the cubicle. Having done this, and sent the children to play in the street in charge of one of the neighbor's children, Mrs. Li set out to find and consult her father, who was the owner of a small native boat plying for hire on the busy waters of the river and the creek separating the European settlement from the native city.

She made her way to the water-front, and, making inquiries from the owners in the numerous craft tied up to the bund, learned that her father had just taken a couple of passengers to catch the evening boat to Hongkong. To the wharf of the steamboat company she accordingly went, where she found her father's boat just about to return home. She stepped on board, related everything that had occurred, and

asked what was the best thing for her to do to carry out her husband's injunctions.

After a good deal of talking, a plan of campaign was decided on. In the first place, recourse must be had to the shop to see if they would move in the matter. If they could only be persuaded to do this, a good deal of worry and anxiety, and, what was more important, a good deal of money, would be saved. Moreover, as the shop was an influential one, and in a large way of business, the authorities would be more likely to pay attention to their representations.

To the shop accordingly Mrs. Li went, and with many chinchinnings, and salaamings besought them to bring her husband's murderer to justice.

Unfortunately the shop had had a previous experience of the manner in which the native authorities administered justice, and knew that it meant a great deal of squeeze-money being paid to all the officials of the court, much worry and trouble for themselves, and very little likelihood of any satisfactory result. So they told Mrs. Li that they had already lost a large sum of money owing to the robbery, that business was very bad, and that they did not see their way to incur any further loss, especially as there was no pecuniary advantage for themselves in prospect. The widow pleaded very hard with them to alter their decision, but to no purpose. Finally, being wearied of her talking, they told her that her husband had never been of very much use, and plenty of men could be found to fill his place; and then added insult to injury by suggesting that it was through his own carelessness and neglect that the robbery and assault had occurred.

Being a woman of energetic temperament, and having an extensive command of Chinese vituperation, acquired during her early life on the river, Mrs. Li, thoroughly roused by this gratuitous slight on her late husband's abilities, let fly at the shop-people to the utmost of her powers. She reviled their ancestors, cast aspersions on their fathers and mothers, cursed their living relations, and made pointed and fairly accurate remarks about their habits generally and their vices in particular. As this took place in the presence of a large crowd of neighbors and onlookers, she had the satisfaction of knowing that, as far as lay in her power, she had successfully discredited the "face" of the shop in the eyes of the neighbors,

and had heightened her own by vigorously doing her duty to her dead husband.

She then returned home to her garret, called the children out of the street, gave them their evening meal, and dispatched the eldest to her (Mrs. Li's) father, calling him to a further council of war. The next step was, without doubt, to apply to the native magistrate, an official who had a great reputation for justice and fair dealing, but who was surrounded by a crowd of satellites and time-servers, who occupied various minor posts in the court, and with whom justice was less than the dust in the balance when compared with the money they could extort from the parties to a case by promises of forwarding the suit of one side or delaying that of the other.

Nothing could be hoped for in this direction without money; and of money Mrs. Li and her relations were peculiarly short. They were all poor people, living a hand-to-mouth existence, knowing few luxuries except at feast times, and having few pleasures except simple ones; content to work on from day to day, happy if they could make enough to buy rice for the daily meals and to make occasional purchases of cloth to repair the wear and tear of their well-used apparel.

A very large portion of the Chinese, however, belong to money loan societies, and the deceased was no exception to the general rule. The principle of these associations is generally a very simple one, and the one to which Li Sing belonged was one of the simplest. He and nine other friends had met together, and each contributed the sum of five dollars to form a fund. They had then drawn lots as to who should have first use of the fifty dollars; when this was decided the money was handed over to the drawer of lot No. 1 for him to use for one year. At the end of the year they all met together again, each bringing another five dollars, and the fifty dollars was handed to the drawer of lot No. 2 for his use for the year; and so on till all in turn had had the use of the capital sum. At the end of the ten years every man had contributed the sum of fifty dollars in ten payments, and had had the use of fifty dollars in a lump sum for one year. Fortunately for Mrs. Li, her husband had drawn a high number, and had already contributed eight payments without yet having had the use of the principal sum. So she went round to the members and requested them to call a special meeting, with the object of getting them to pay her the fifty dollars which would, at the next meeting,

have come to her husband. As she failed to get them to do this, she persuaded one of the members to purchase Li's interest for thirty-eight dollars, and being given this sum, she went away quite contented.

By dint of importuning her friends and with the help of her family, she made this sum up to fifty dollars; and then, having exhausted every possible avenue of credit, she went to the magistrate's court. By making a small payment to one of the clerks she got him to draw up a petition setting out the facts. Several more payments to other officials enabled her to get the petition laid before the magistrate, who appointed the next day for her to appear before him. On the morrow she duly made her appearance, stated her complaint, and the magistrate, after a short conference with his clerk, to whom Mrs. Li had previously paid a sum of five dollars to ensure his co-operation, made an order directing the *yamen* runners to apprehend the murderers and bring him before the court at once. But before any move was made by the officials further inroads were made on Mrs. Li's little store, which made a serious hole in its proportions.

Unfortunately for Mrs. Li and her hopes, the murderer's family happened to have a little more money at their command than she had. Surreptitious five-dollar notes handed to the *yamen* runners at once made them aware that the man they were searching for had fled into the country, and that none of his relatives had the slightest knowledge of his whereabouts. They accordingly made a report to this effect to the magistrate.

Mrs. Li knew well enough what the real state of affairs was. Whispers had already reached her that, notwithstanding the *yamen* runners' reports, the murderer was still to be seen in the eating houses and streets of the quarter in which he lived. Still she did not give up hope. A further petition to the magistrate, with a heavy fee to ensure immediate presentation, stating her belief that he was still to be found, led to a further order for his immediate arrest. She doubled her fees to the runners, and promised them the whole of her fast-dwindling balance if they would only arrest him; and this these far-seeing officials at length determined to do. They knew Mrs. Li had reached very nearly the end of her resources; but they strongly suspected there was money still to be made from the other side. So they set off again, and, notwith-

standing all the protests and bribes offered to them, put on an air of incorruptible integrity, seized their prisoner, and marched him away to jail.

Then followed, as they expected, a petition by his friends for him to be set free, accompanied with the proper monetary tributes so inseparable from its due presentation. Mrs. Li counter-petitioned in vain. Her resources were at an end. What small payments she could make were far outweighed by those made by the other side. At last she could pay no more, and the officials, after extracting a more than usually heavy fee from the murderer's family, presented their petition for his freedom. The magistrate made the order usual in such cases, calling on Mrs. Li to come forward and substantiate her case—an order she was very willing to obey had the officials but informed her of it. But this, knowing there was nothing more to be got from her, they carefully refrained from doing. On the contrary they went to the other side, told them a day was fixed for the hearing, and could only with great difficulty be postponed; and, having worked on their fears to great profit and advantage, finally arranged that the case should be called without notification to Mrs. Li.

The appointed day came, and the case was laid before the magistrate. He was a busy man; and, although striving to do justice to the best of his lights, he had so many of these petitions and counter-petitions presented to him as a matter of course that it was impossible for him to attempt any sifting of the truth of the allegations contained in them unless the parties were actually before him, and even then it was an almost hopeless task. After asking whether Mrs. Li were present, and being told by his subordinates that she could not be found, he made an order dismissing her petition and the prisoner from custody, and finished by dismissing the matter from his mind.

All these proceedings, owing to Mrs. Li's persistent energy, occupied but five or six days. During this time the dead man lay awaiting vengeance before burial; and at the end Mrs. Li found, notwithstanding all her efforts, that her funds were exhausted, that the murderer had been set at liberty, and that her husband's injunctions still remained unexecuted

What was now to be done? Another family conference was called, and long and anxious were the deliberations. It would have been an easy matter for some one to have shot the

murderer just as he had shot Li Sing; but that was not the kind of retribution she was seeking for. It would have entailed no public disgrace; it might even have enlisted popular sympathy on his side and made him a martyr instead of a criminal. What then was to be done? She had no money now, and no influence. How could she hope to bring to book the murderer who was well supplied with both? Nobody at the conference could suggest any solution of her problem for a long time. At length her father said slowly and cautiously, and as one who makes a statement not expecting it to be believed, that he had heard that the foreign devils who lived apart over the creek had influence with the magistrates; and, further, that they would, so he had heard, sometimes help other people, even Chinese, without asking for any payment for it.

A silence fell over the little gathering after this statement. They knew that the foreign devils were all mad and often did mad things; but that they should do so mad a thing as this had never entered into their contemplation. For why should anybody, they argued, interest himself with other people's troubles, and run the risk of making them his own, unless there was some great profit to be gained by doing so? They shook their heads and said it sounded very nice, but it was too absurd to be thought of. To Mrs. Li, however, the idea presented itself as a straw to be clutched at—a weak and impossible straw perhaps, but still a straw; and, what was a good deal more, a straw that wanted no purchasing, no petitions, no bribes—just clutching, and that was all. Long after the meeting had broken up she pondered over the idea and how it could be made to shoot into effect and into retribution. At length she fully made up her mind, and decided when the straw was to be clutched at, how long it was to be held on to and when it was to be left to be floated down the stream towards the little haven into which she wildly hoped it might safely enter, there to be noticed and gathered, or to be left unheeded as the gods might direct.

By the following morning she had thought it all out, and at once proceeded to put her design into execution. She went to her father, and arranged with him that she should have the use of his sampan for a week or ten days. She took possession of it, had it brought round to the creek and moored at the back of the house where her cubicle was situated. She

then made an inspection of the size and capacity of the damp evil-smelling hole under the deck where the pots and pans and all the miscellaneous rubbish of the occupants were usually kept. These she carefully removed, and stored them in her attic. Then, with the assistance of a friend, she carried the body of her husband to the boat and carefully deposited it in the hole, put on the hatch, collected her family together, and made every preparation for a week's stay on board. Finally she got on board herself, took command of the large steering oar, and slowly rowed the boat in the direction of the creek which divided the European settlement from the native city. Up this narrow water-way, choked with boats, muddy-colored, and filled with floating garbage of all descriptions, the boat with its grewsome cargo slowly made its way until it reached the back of the compound belonging to the Commissioner of Customs. Here she carefully moored it to one of the many rotting posts sticking out from the bund, and sat down to await the course of events. For two days she stayed there, patiently waiting and attending to the wants of her little household. On the third day, no notice having been taken of her presence, she unfastened her moorings and rowed a little higher up the creek to the back of the residence of the English consul. Here she again moored her boat, and again sat down to wait.

Her Majesty's acting vice-consul at Canton, A. C. B. Jordan, Esq., was a young but energetic man who was temporarily in charge of affairs during a visit of the consul to Hongkong, where he had entered a pony for the races; a course which led to a not unnatural desire to see the animal perform, and, incidentally, to indulge in any social festivities which might be going on in that enterprising port. So the acting vice-consul found the whole burden of maintaining the prestige and protecting the commerce of the Empire at Canton thrust on his shoulders, if only for a short time. Fortunately, or unfortunately—Fate will not tell us which—no burning questions arose calling for instant decision and prompt action during this short period, though he felt himself quite equal to dealing with them if they had arisen; and had even, in speculating on such a contingency, contemplated cutting the cable connecting him with the outer world so that he might not be hampered with instructions from home.

On the second day of his reign he came down to breakfast

in that state of mind and health which rendered it dangerous for anyone to speak to him without having been first directly spoken to; a not uncommon condition amongst many residents in the far East. A late night, a good deal of bad luck at cards, a good many cocktails at the club before dinner, and a good many whiskies-and-sodas after had all borne their share in the generation of his present violent headache and irritable frame of mind. He sat down to his breakfast with the usual repugnance to consume anything but hot tea, inseparable from his physical condition. He turned away from his porridge after taking a spoonful, and eyed with distrust the fried bacon his cook sent up as the next course. Finally he fell back on a couple of boiled eggs. He had hardly opened the first before he made up his mind that it was bad; and, if the first was bad, it was only natural he should imagine the second was bad also. As a matter of fact, the eggs were in a very fair state of freshness, not even having acquired that condition in which they are known as "monsoon eggs." But to his irritated senses they appeared veritable electioneering eggs, to say the least of it. He was confirmed in his opinion by an indefinable suggestion of some horrible smell which became apparent to his olfactory nerves just about this time, and which he thought proceeded from the eggs in front of him. Loudly calling for his servant, he used some very strong language to him about his carelessness in allowing such eggs to be set before him, and ordered him to take them away and inform the cook his wages would at the end of the month be diminished by the deduction of twenty-five cents for each egg.

When the servant returned the smell still seemed to linger about the room, and he ordered him to open the windows and doors to purify the atmosphere. Instead of this proceeding having the desired effect, it seemed only to intensify the smell, which grew stronger and stronger every minute. Again was the long-suffering servant called in, and told by his irritated master that the cook must be concocting some filthy Chinese mess in the kitchen, and that if the smell went on he would sack him at the end of the month. The servant returned with the information that nothing was being cooked, and that the cook had even emptied the fire out of the chatties. He then added in that curious pidgin-English adopted by the Chinese, so expressive and often so condensed, "I think so that smell belong one sampan."

Further inquiries from his master elicited the information that a sampan had been moored to the consulate posts for the last twenty-four hours, and that the smell had its origin from somewhere or something on board it. The consulate clerk was sent to make inquiries, and returned in a little while and informed his master, "Have got one piecee dead man that sampan. Some man have shootum he. Makee die long time. Too muchee smellum."

Jordan, moved partly by a sense of curiosity and partly by the oppressiveness of the smell, which became stronger and stronger, swallowed his tea and set out, accompanied by an interpreter, to make inquiries for himself. Not feeling equal to boarding the boat, he sent the interpreter to fetch Mrs. Li, who was seated on the little deck. From her he learnt the whole story. Beginning at the beginning, as all Chinese do, she told him of her marriage, of her husband's position, of the birth of the children, and finally of the theft, the assault, the fatal result, and of her unavailing efforts to obtain redress.

Jordan listened gravely to her story, told her she must move the boat away from his premises, and said he would see what he could do for her.

Going back to his office he called in the head clerk and had a long discussion with him on the merits of the case. As a result of these deliberations he determined to go and see the magistrate himself. So he ordered out the consular official chair, a huge and cumbrous vehicle covered with green silk with black fringings, and carried by four coolies dressed out in official livery and wearing little round straw hats with a small red button at the top and a long red tassel hanging from it, as though they were descendants of the great Panjandrum himself.

Through the narrow streets of the great city the chair made its way; till it finally came to a stop before a rickety looking building which formed the court of the Nam-hoi magistrate.

Here the chair was set down, and a coolie dispatched to the magistrate with a message that the acting vice-consul wished for an audience. In a little time an official came out. who said the magistrate was highly honored by receiving a visit from so honorable a personage, and would he condescend to enter his insignificant abodes?

The temple of justice, as represented by the magistrate's court, was a low, dark, evil-smelling room redolent of Chinese tobacco, of an unwashed multitude, of sickly, clinging opium. The magistrate's seat was one of the carved blackwood chairs with a marble bottom so commonly found in Chinese interiors. This was placed on a small raised dais at one end of the room. Over it was a dingy canopy in yellow and red silk, fantastically embroidered with dragons and peacocks and other emblems of the throne of the "Son of Heaven." In front was a small table, at which, seated on small stools, two clerks were busy recording fines and punishments in oblong dirty, tissue-paper-colored books. Two or three runners with red hats on lounged about the court; and in the background was a chattering, struggling, spitting crowd of the great unwashed of Canton.

The magistrate raised his head as Jordan approached, and signed to one of the runners to conduct him to a seat on the bench. There, after the inevitable flowery and meaningless compliments had been exchanged, Jordan told his story. The magistrate listened attentively, and remarked that it was no doubt correct; but the widow had not appeared when summoned, and so of course the case had been dismissed. The fact that she had never been told of the summons was quite immaterial. He had ordered her to appear. She had not appeared. There was an end of it. Jordan pressed him to order a fresh hearing, and guaranteed to produce the widow. Finally he stated that if the case were not reheard he should report the matter to the British minister at Peking, petitioning him to request the Viceroy to see into the matter. Having the usual dislike of Chinese officials to have any act of commission or ommission of theirs inquired into by anyone but themselves, and forseeing that any such inquiry, whatever the result, must necessarily mean trouble to him and equally necessarily, expense, the magistrate reluctantly appointed an hour for the rehearing on the following morning, and sent off his runners to arrest the murderer; while Jordan, half stifled by the fetid atmosphere of the court, gladly made his way back to the Consulate.

Having some slight experience of the ways of native justice, he returned the next morning to see that the matter was not again allowed to be delayed or obstructed. He found all parties duly present, and the evidence just concluded. As

he entered, two grave-looking Chinese doctors were holding a post-mortem on the body in the middle of the court. This consisted in rolling up a piece of paper in the form of a pipe-light and inserting it in the wound to see if it was deep enough to be the cause of death. After much consultation they pronounced that it was, and the prisoner, seeing he had no further hope, and wishing to escape torture, confessed his guilt to the magistrate, who promptly made the order for his execution. The runners took their prisoner back to the cells, and several days later the final ceremony took place. The execution-ground was a narrow strip of land left unbuilt on in the heart of the city, and when not required for the purposes of justice was used by a potter for drying his wares. There Jordan betook himself on the appointed day to see the thing through to the end.

A small space had been cleared amongst the pots and pans, and the prisoner, with his hands bound behind him, was made to kneel down in the middle of it while the executioner made ready. That official, after testing the keenness of his sword—a heavy weapon with a blade about two feet long and six inches broad, made very thick and heavy at the back and having an edge as keen as a razor—gave two or three preliminary flourishes in the air, and, stepping up to the prisoner, knotted his que up in a bunch on the top of his head, and affixed to his back a small piece of paper setting out his crime. Ordering the prisoner to stretch out his neck he slowly raised the heavy sword in the air, and just as slowly let it fall on the outstretched neck. There was no forced use, no striking, no sense of concussion. The knife was simply lifted in the air and then let fall as by its own weight; slowly it fell till it reached the prisoner's neck, nor did it pause there for an instant; slowly it fell, the prisoner's head falling with it. The vendetta of Li Sing was accomplished.

Over Jordan's mantelpiece hangs a heavy Chinese executioner's sword, which he obtained at a cost of thirty dollars. If asked for its history he says it is a souvenir of the first time he had sole charge of the interests of the British Empire, and that with its aid he succeeded in obtaining justice for a Chinese coolie.

# Anecdotes.

IN this department a first prize of $5.00 in gold, and second and third prizes of an annual subscription to Short Stories each, will be given for the best, the second and the third best original or selected anecdotes sent in before the 1st day of the month following the date of this issue. No other compensation is made for matter used in this department. **The sources from which all selected or reprinted anecdotes have been taken must be clearly stated. The Editor cannot return contributions or correspond about them. If the story is valuable keep a copy of it.** Address "Anecdotes," care The Current Literature Publishing Co., 34 West 26th Street, New York.

## The Piano and the Calf.

Here's a German comedy from real life which shows we are not the only humorous people on the globe: A student at the University of Leipzig was tormented by a piano in the flat above him and two cornets in the flat below. He requested a cessation of the concert after 10 p.m., but was refused. Then he brought a calf into his room and at night when the music ceased he would twist the calf's tail and make the beast bellow. Summoned into court, he defended himself on a plea of self-defense, but the Judge, while admitting his right to make a noise, fined him for "raising cattle" on premises not set apart for that purpose. The piano and the cornets continue.—W. T. Bonstell.

## The Saving of Rome.

During the time when Hans von Bülow was conductor of the royal orchestra in Hanover he was drilling the choruses, largely composed of volunteers, for an oratorio. The sopranos and altos, assembled for rehearsal, were passing the time of waiting for the conductor in shrill feminine chatter. Here von Bülow slipped quietly to his place, unnoticed, in the general cackle of conversation, tapped sharply with his baton, and, in the silence that ensued, remarked genially:

"Allow me to assure you, ladies, that Rome *has* been saved!"—Ellen C. Emerson.

## Reward of Ready Wit.

The adjutant on duty, a lieutenant, reported one morning to Emperor Paul on the condition of a military post. He presented a tabulated statement giving the number of men on guard duty, awaiting orders, sick, and under arrest. On this occasion none were under arrest. His majesty compared the oral report with the written one.

Officer: "On duty so many, awaiting orders so many, sick so many, under arrest—" and recalling that none were under arrest, he stopped in utter confusion.

"Who is under arrest?" asked the Tsar.

The officer was confused more than ever, and remained silent.

"Who is under arrest?" raising his voice sternly, repeated Paul.

"I, Sire!" spoke the officer kneeling.

"Rise, Captain!" gaily said his majesty, pleased with his adjutant's ready wit.—Selected from the Russian *Vestnik Rossiysk, Ob. Kr. Kr.* by B. Israeli.

(In accordance with our offer the first prize of $5 in gold, and second and third prizes of subscriptions to Short Stories for one year, have been awarded respectively to W. T. Bonstell, Eureka, Humboldt Co., California; Ellen C. Emerson, The Homestead, Hot Springs, Va.; and Dr. B. Israeli, Army Medical Museum, Washington, D. C., for the foregoing three best anecdotes submitted before April 1st.)

## Bees as Big as Sheep.

An Irishman after reaching America was full of homesick brag, in which nothing in America even approached things of a similar variety in Ireland. In speaking of the bees of the ould sod he grew especially roseate, and said:

"Why, the baze in that counthry is twice as big as in this. Indade, they're bigger than that. They're as big as th' shape ye have in this counthry!"

"Bees as big as sheep!" said his incredulous listener. "Why, what kind of hives do they have to keep them in in?"

"No bigger than the ones in this counthry," was the reply.

"Then how do the bees get into the hives?" he was asked.

"Well," replied the Irishman, "that's their own dom lookout."—Selected from Law Notes of Northport, L. I., by Flora Pierce.

## Tom Reed's Reply.

The opening of a large annex to the famous Poland Springs had been arranged to be one of the biggest events the State had known for years. The Governor, congressmen, and senators, and all the distinguished men of the State were to be present. Reed sent his regrets, as he did not care to go. The night before the fête, Clarence Hale, a brother of the Senator, sent Reed a telegram urging him to be present. His reply was short:

"Commercial paper requires two good names; only one on yours," and he sent the message collect.

—Madeline Reilly.

## He Wanted a Job.

A merchant in Chestnut street has become very fond of an office boy he engaged last June. The boy entered very early in the morning when the merchant was reading the paper. The latter glanced up and went on reading without speaking. After three minutes the boy said:

"Excuse me—but I'm in a hurry!"

"What do you want?" he was asked.

"A job."

"You do? Well," snorted the man of business, "why are you in such a hurry?"

"Got to hurry," replied the boy. "Left school yesterday to go to work and haven't struck anything yet. I can't waste time. If you've got nothing for me, say so, and I'll look elsewhere. The only place I can stop long is where they pay me for it."

"When can you come?" asked the surprised merchant.

"Don't have to come," he was told. "I'm here now, and would have been to work before this if you'd said so."—Selected by E. L. Bostwick from The Philadelphia Public Ledger.

## Method in His Madness.

Many of the patients at Bloomingdale Insane Asylum are allowed the liberty of the grounds. Recently the superintendent of the institution permitted some of the trusties to assist the workmen who are making additions to the main building.

A few days ago an attendant observed a dignified man silently trundling a wheelbarrow turned upside down along the paths.

"Hey there," cried the keeper; "hold on a minute."

The lunatic stopped with an air of offended dignity.

"Is that the way to address a gentleman?" he asked. "What do you want?"

"What are you doing with that wheelbarrow?"

"Friend," said the crazy man, "if you had watched me closely, you would have seen what I was doing with the wheelbarrow. I was pushing it. I will now push it some more."

"Hold on a minute," said the attendant; "don't you know it is foolish to push a wheelbarrow that is wrong side up?"

"Foolish?" said the demented one; "may be it's not so foolish as it seems to you. Yesterday I kept my wheelbarrow right side up and every time I came around a pie-faced Irishman dumped a hod of bricks into it. I know better now. I'm not such a fool as I look."—Adapted from the N. Y. Sun by L. R. Andrews.

## The Lawyer Knew.

Assistant District Attorney Osborne during the noon recess of the Molineux trial told of a celebrated North Carolina lawyer who was practising in a backwoods mountain district.

While he was waiting for his case to be reached, the trial of a notorious highway robber who had been caught redhanded was called. The prisoner had no counsel and the presiding judge requested the distinguished lawyer to defend him. The trial lasted two days, and, to the court's astonishment, the jury returned a verdict of acquittal. As the prisoner was about to be discharged, the lawyer stepped up to the Judge and requested a few words in private.

"What is it?" asked the court.

"I would ask your honor," replied the lawyer, "to have the prisoner detained in jail to-night. I have to cross a lonely field on my way home, and the rascal happens to know that I have money about me."—Selected by E. L. Bostwick from The New York Times.

## The Emperor and His Pilot.

When Emperor William made his recent trip to Norway he surprised and pleased his old Norwegian pilot Nordhuus, very much, by talking to him in his native language. Two years ago, at the beginning of Nordhuus's experience as pilot on the Hohenzollern, he expected, as the result of his first trip, to be summarily dismissed from the Kaiser's service. Instead, he was made life-pilot to the Emperor at a salary of 2,500 marks a year, and since has received may tokens of favor.

The entrance to the Norwegian harbors is extremely narrow and tortuous. The whole peninsula is surrounded by islands and peaks of rocks jutting out of the water, and the channels often run so close to them that standing on the deck of a ship, it seems that you could almost touch them by reaching out your hand.

The entrance to the harbor of Odda is especially dangerous, and Nordhuus, on his first trip on the yacht, was carrying the Hohenzollern in at half speed, when the Emperor came on the bridge in one of those fits of temper which sometimes possess him and ordered everybody below, declaring that they did not know how to handle a ship, they were a pack of cowards for running so slowly, and he would take the vessel in himself. The German officers promptly obeyed, though they expected in a few minutes to be struggling in the sea, but Nordhuus stood stolidly at his post, ceaselessly shifting the wheel.

He is a man of medium height, with the fair hair now slightly tinged with gray, and the blue eyes of the Norwegian type, wearing a yellow beard, and having the bold, strong features of his Viking ancestors. The Emperor strode across the bridge and rang the bell full speed ahead, at the same time putting out his other hand to take the wheel. Nordhuus placed himself in the way, and, leaning over the wheel, called down the tube to the engine room, "Half speed. Never mind the bell!"

"You countermand my orders!" cried the Emperor, giving the bell a furious jingle.

"Disregard the bell!" called Nordhuus through the tube, unmoved.

The Emperor glared at the pilot a moment, and then, choking down his rage, drew himself up stiffly. "Go below," he said, majestically, "and report yourself under arrest."

"Leave the bridge!" responded Nordhuus grimly, grasping the wheel more firmly. "This ship is in my charge,

and I'll have no interference with my orders from king or seaman!"

The officers on the deck hurried silently aft, wishing well to the pilot. Nordhuus stood at his post, unshaken by threats, unheeding commands, and carried the royal yacht safely into the harbor.

The next day the Emperor decorated the sturdy pilot with one of the lower grades of the order of the Black Eagle, and made him his life pilot for Norwegian waters.—Selected from The Boston Brown Book by J. Y. Sinton.

## Kept His Back to the Wall.

Prior to the war with Spain, while Fitzhugh Lee was consul-general in Cuba, repeated attempts were made to assassinate him. Twenty and thirty letters a day were received by the general, threatening death.

"I was on my guard constantly," said Mr. Lee, "and my hand seldom left my six-shooter."

"Were you not afraid that some coward would, unawares, stab you in the back?" asked a gentleman who had listened to Mr. Lee's address before the Patria club of New York.

"No," said the general significantly, "there is one thing that those Spaniards did well—they built walls of unusual thickness."—Selected by M. C. Hirschfield from The Detroit Free Press.

## Went Him One Better.

There was a short street in a certain city on which three tailors had their shops. One, wishing to outdo the others in matter of advertisement, one day placed this sign over his door: "The Best Tailor in the City."

One of the other tailors, seeing this sign, after a few days of hard thinking, placed a placard over his door which read: "The Best Tailor in the World," and sat contentedly in his shop in the consciousness that he could not possibly be outdone.

The third tailor passed these two signs daily in great perplexity of thought; finally he also was free from anxiety and soon thereafter appeared his own sign, "The Best Tailor on This Street."—H. D. McDonald.

## An Apt Reply.

An American just returned from Paris is responsible for the following amusing story. It seems it is a custom for certain obsequious servants and minor officials of the gay capital to obtain tips from travelers by pretending to take them for famous or titled personages. Our American, who, by the way, is of rather imposing appearance, had a door opened for him at the Paris opera-house by an *ouvreur*, or usher, who bowed low and said:

"The door is open, prince!"

The American glanced affably at him, and without extending the expected tip simply said:

"Thank you very much, Viscount!" and passed on.—Selected by Edith Nichols from McCall's Magazine.

## An Anecdote of Tom Reed.

One night after Mr. Reed had retired after an exhausting day's work and was sleeping soundly, about midnight his doorbell rang several times, as if there was some matter of great importance; and, hurrying to the door, he found a messenger boy with a telegram. He became quite angry when he opened the message and read the contents. But, finally, the humor of the situation struck him and he took it good-naturedly. It should be said that the instance occurred a few days after the publication of his famous statement, as to what constituted a statesman, in which he said, "A statesman is a successful politician who is dead." The telegram was signed with the name of a Boston man, who telegraphed: "Why don't you die and become a statesman?"

Mr. Reed sent this answer collect:

"Not yet. Fame is the last infirmity of noble minds."—Madeline Reilly.

## Education a Fine Thing.

During the cotton-picking season in Texas a colored man who had gone into the country to pick cotton, returned very much disgusted.

"Didn't you git no offers to pick cotton?" asked a friend.

"Yes, sich as dey was. A white man offered me one-fourth of what I picked. I jess took a look at de field, and I saw for myself dat when hit was all picked hit wouldn' amount to one-fourth, so I leff fer home."

"You was in luck you didn't git fooled."

"You bet I was. My 'refmetic was all what saved me. I tells you, send your chilluns to school."—Selected from Harper's Magazine for June, 1883, by Ethel Payne.

## Had a Record, Too.

Here is a story attributed to Wilton Lackaye:

A man from Johnstown died and arrived at the gates of heaven.

"What claim have you to enter?" asked Peter.

"I am from Johnstown, Pa.," said the man. "I saved eleven lives during the flood."

"Pass in," said Peter.

Inside the gate a group of saints stood chatting. The Johnstown man joined them.

"I am from Johnstown, Pa.," he said, introducing himself. "I saved eleven lives in the flood."

A little man with a long gray beard looked him up and down contemptuously.

"You make me tired!" he said and walked away from the group of saints, who laughed uproariously.

The Johnstown man, somewhat abashed, joined another group of saints and again introduced himself.

"I am from Johnstown, Pa. I saved eleven lives during the flood."

Instantly the little man with the gray beard came forward.

"You make me tired," he said snappishly, and walked away, while the rest of the saints shook their sides with laughter.

The Johnstown man went back to Peter.

"I don't like the manners of your saints," he said. "I introduced myself to some of them, telling them I was from Johnstown, Pa., and had saved eleven lives during the flood, and each time a little man with a gray beard told me I made him tired, and walked away, while the saints laughed in a very vulgar way. Who is the man?"

"Who?" said Peter. "Why, that's Noah!"—Selected by Philip Morse, from What to Eat.

## Didn't Believe Him.

During a discussion of the manners of the sons of distinguished Americans, the other evening, an instructor in one of the private military academies along the Hudson river told this story:

"The faculty of our school were delighted when Gov. Crane of Massachusetts sent his son to us, and we all grew fond of him, for he was a bright and extremely modest youth. In fact, his modesty was so marked that we often talked about it among ourselves. One day there came to the school a party of distinguished visitors, and the principal called up a number of the brightest boys in order to question them. Among these was young Crane.

"'Robert, who is the Governor of Massachusetts?' inquired he, turning to the boy suddenly.

"The youth thought for a time and then answered: 'I am sure I don't know.'

"'You certainly don't mean to tell me you do not know who the Governor of your own State is?' replied the astonished man. 'Think a moment longer.'

"'I am sorry, sir, but I really don't know,' answered the boy.

"'Why, Robert, your father is the Governor of Massachusetts,' exclaimed the bewildered principal.

" 'Yes, he told me that himself once,' answered the boy in the same quiet manner, 'but I never believed it. I thought he was only stringing me.'"—Selected by Harry H. Siff, from The New York Times.

## The Use of the Brake.

The other day Pat went to a cycle agent with the intention of buying a "bike." He inspected a few, but what puzzled him most was the brake.

"What's that for?" inquired Pat.

"Oh," replied the agent, "you use that when coming to a steep hill."

Pat learned to ride fairly well, and while out one day, he came to a steep hill, which he must climb. "Now for the brake," thought Pat, and off he started, full pressure on brake up the hill.

Half-way up some friends saw him, exclaiming:

"Pull off the brake, man; you're uphill."

"Ah!" said Pat, "can't you see, man, that's to keep it from going back down the hill?"—Selected by M. E. N., from Spare Moments, London.

## "A Word in Season."

A clergyman had just received an appointment to a small town in Nova Scotia which at this time was in a high state of excitement over the fact that a band of robbers had been terrorizing the surrounding country. Already many of the inhabitants had been held up and relieved of their valuables.

The newly arrived pastor was making a late evening sick call some miles out of town. His route lay over a very desolate part of the country, and as his horse skipped over the frosty, snow-covered road, his thoughts dwelt on the robbers bold.

Looking ahead he descried a rough looking old man with a bundle on his back and carrying a heavy stick. Then he felt cold shivers—"Whip up" and to past quickly was his first thought. Then he thought, "My duty certainly is to try and do him some good; anyway, should I pass him quickly, he may shoot."

"Whoa, Nell!" "Wo-Wo-Won't you have a lift, my man?" the pastor stuttered woefully.

The robber, who by the way was only a peaceful citizen, climbed into the sleigh and was in mortal fear, thinking one of the band had waylaid him. Both sat shivering for some time. At last the clergyman, determined to make the most of his opportunity, turned to his companion saying:

"My friend, are you pre-pre-pre-prepared to die,"

This settled the old man. With one bound he was out of the sled, over the fence and away off over the snow-covered fields into the frosty starlight night, expecting every instant to feel the bullet of, as he thought, the terrible robber chief.—S. C. Moore.

## A True Story.

A Sunday school superintendent, in talking to the children about cruelty to animals, said:

"Only a coward would abuse a creature that had no way of protecting itself. Why, children," said he, "I once knew a little boy who cut off a calf's tail. Think of it, children, took a knife and cut the tail right off! Can any one tell me a verse in the Bible that would have taught this cruel boy that he should not have cut off the calf's tail?"

After a moment's silence, a small boy, with a "happy thought" expression, held up his hand.

"What is it, my boy?" asked the superintendent hopefully.

"What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder," responded the small boy.

The superintendent was so impressed that he never brought his own verse to light.—Selected by Luke Cunniff, from The New World.

## The Author and the Salesman.

The author wanted some summer reading, and he sought out an unfamiliar shop. Unfortunately, he was a facetious author. There were people who thought him rather proud of himself. At any rate, he thought he would be recognized anywhere, because his portrait had appeared with some frequency in the periodical press. So when, after he had chosen several works of fiction by other writers, the salesman handed him a copy of his own latest book, he winked drolly at the man behind the counter, and pushed the book away from him in mock disgust.

"For Heaven's sake, no!" he cried. "I can't read that man's stuff."

"Well, to tell you the truth," said the salesman, solemnly, "*I can't either.*"—Selected by Eleanor Marchant, from Harper's Monthly.

## Phillips and Blaine.

When Wendell Phillips was last in Washington he was for a few minutes on the floor of the United States Senate, surrounded by a group of senators, among whom was Senator James G. Blaine, always a favorite with Mr. Phillips. It so happened that a few weeks before this time Mr. Blaine, in presenting to Congress the statue of Governor King, first governor of Maine, to be placed in the rotunda of the capitol, had commented severely on the loyalty of Massachusetts, and especially the Federalist party, during the war with Great Britain in 1812. Of this party the father of Wendell Phillips, John Phillips, was a conspicuous member. When Blaine's speech was made, Dawes and Hoar were the senators from Massachusetts, and they both essayed some sort of an impromptu reply thereto, but did themselves little credit in parrying the thrusts of Blaine's glittering rapier. So when Wendell Phillips met Blaine on this occasion he said to him, laughingly, "I wish I had been a member of this body for about an hour the other day, when you made that speech attacking the Massachusetts Federalists." "Ah," said Mr. Blaine, with that ready wit which never deserted him, "if *you* had been here, I shouldn't have made that speech!"—Selected from Harper's Monthly, by Eleanor Marchant.

## Rough Treatment for the Baby.

A Canadian firm recently placed with the Montreal and Toronto newspapers an advertisement of a new nursing bottle it had patented, and was about to place on the market. After giving directions for use, the "ad" ended in this manner:

"When the baby is done drinking it must be unscrewed and laid in a cool place, under a tap. If the baby does not thrive on fresh milk it should be boiled."—Selected from the Philadelphia Times, by Arthur Earl.

## Did Not Care to See Mr. Cleveland.

General John B. Gordon of Georgia tells an anecdote which illustrates his delightful simplicity of manner, and the Southern gentleman's devotion to his old black mammy.

"When President and Mrs. Cleveland were making a tour of the South shortly after their marriage they visited Atlanta. I was then Governor of Georgia, and was happy to give a reception in their honor.

"During the day I said to the President: 'Mr. Cleveland, wouldn't you like to see a real old Southern mammy?'

"'I certainly should,' he answered.

"'Then I will send out to the plantation for my old mammy. She has nursed four generations of our family.

"'Tom,' I said to the coachman, 'take the carriage, go out to the plantation and tell Mammy to put on her best frock and come in with you; I want to introduce her to the Honorable Grover Cleveland, President of the United States.'

"Tom went, and I did not see anything more of him until the reception was nearly over. The President and Mrs. Cleveland with a few other guests were grouped in the center of the room, when I saw Tom peeping in at the door.

"Beckoning him to me, I asked: 'Why doesn't Mammy come?'

"Unhesitatingly he replied from the door: 'Mammy says she ain't comin' to see no Grover Cleveland. She's seen bigger men than he is. She's seen her Mars John, an' she ain't keerin' 'bout seein' no President ob de United States.'

"Everybody laughed, no one more heartily than the President.

"'Well, Mr. Cleveland,' I said, 'I reckon you never had anybody sit down on you like that before!'"—Selected by Eric Kobbe, from The Ladies' Home Journal.

## The Doubtful Age.

Little Richard, who is five, and who has arrived at the dignity of first trousers, was disgusted when he saw a little neighbor, aged three, arrayed also in the garments of distinction.

"Now, just look what they've done to Wilson's baby!" he exclaimed. "They've gone and put it in pants before they know whether it's going to be a boy or a girl!"—L. J. BACHENHEIMER.

## The Price of Sausage.

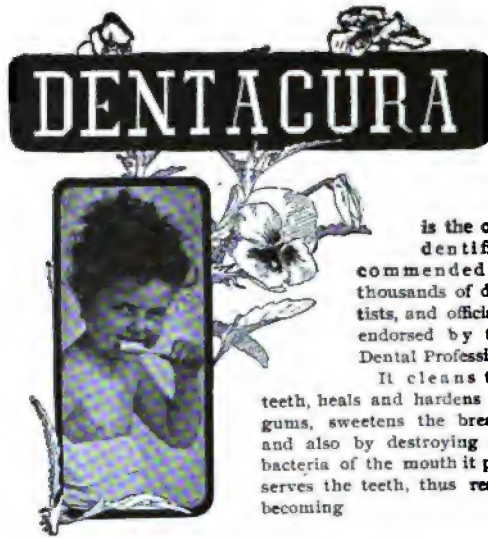
Senator Depew was talking politics with a man who declared that the price of everything depended on the law of supply and demand.

"That is not always true," said the senator "I asked a German butcher the other day the price of sausage.

"'Fifteen cents a pound,' he said, adding after a momentary pause, 'but I hain't got none alretty.'

"I asked him why he quoted a price when he could not deliver the goods.

"'Oh,' he explained. 'If I hat some der brice vould be dwenty cends. But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"So, you see, the price went down when there was no supply and no demand, for I didn't want sausage and had asked merely to gratify my love of talking."—Selected by E. L. Bostwick from The New York Times.

### Would Have Saved Paradise.

As a Christmas gift to the Paris branch of the J. P. Morgan Co., the head of that great banking house sent ten barrels of the finest American apples. A glimpse of these apples prompted the remark "that those Frenchmen will feel now as though they never knew how a real apple tastes."

In selecting these luscious gifts Mr. Morgan experienced all the irritation of a Christmas shopper. Useless to say that he wanted the best. Samples were shown the great financier of one particular apple which the dealer asserted was the best on the market. The tenacity with which the dealer clung to this particular quality of apple annoyed Mr. Morgan, and he said sharply:

"If Eve had tempted Adam with this apple that couple would still be in Paradise."—Selected by M. C. Hirschfield from the Detroit Free Press.

### A Matter of Business.

The members of the Chinese Legation in Washington have always been very fond of American society. Some years ago a secretary, a portly and dignified mandarin, and two younger attachés of the legation, graced with their presence the parlor of the wife of a Government official. During the conversation the four-year-old nephew of the hostess, a bright little fellow, walked in, and announced his preference for the above-mentioned secretary by climbing on his lap. Mr. Cheng, as we shall call this dignitary, was well pleased with the youngster's attentions. After Young


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America had sufficiently admired the great man's silks and buttons, he turned to the distinguished visitor with the most bewitching of smiles, and inquired: "Where is your laundry?"

On this occasion our Chinese friends did not unduly prolong their visit.—Selected by B. Israeli, from Lippincott's.

### The Artist's Wager.

An artist and a friend were at a French café. The artist made a wager with his friend that he would drink the coffee just brought to an old gentleman opposite and with his entire approval.

His friend accepted the wager and the artist joined the gentleman. "Pardon me for my seeming intrusion, but I am an inspector for the Board of Health and I would like to know what kind of coffee they serve in this place. They know me, and naturally if I called for coffee they would bring me a superior article, whereas you have been served with the kind generally given. May I take the liberty of trying yours?"

"Certainly," replied the gentleman. "I am delighted that the Government takes such care of its people."

The artist drank the coffee and said, "They undoubtedly use good coffee here and make it well." Then thanking the gentleman for his assistance in his work of inspection, he walked out, leaving the gentleman to pay for the coffee, but perfectly satisfied to do so, for he felt so grateful to the Government for its care.—Selected from "Wit and Humor," by A. R. SPOFFORD.

### An Eccentric Chap.

He is an eccentric chap and often does strange things, eminently philosophical, but queer, you know. And so it was that upon becoming engaged to be married he presented to the young lady a ring, on the inside of which was engraved the motto:

"In time of peace prepare for war."
—ALBAN RYAN, JR.

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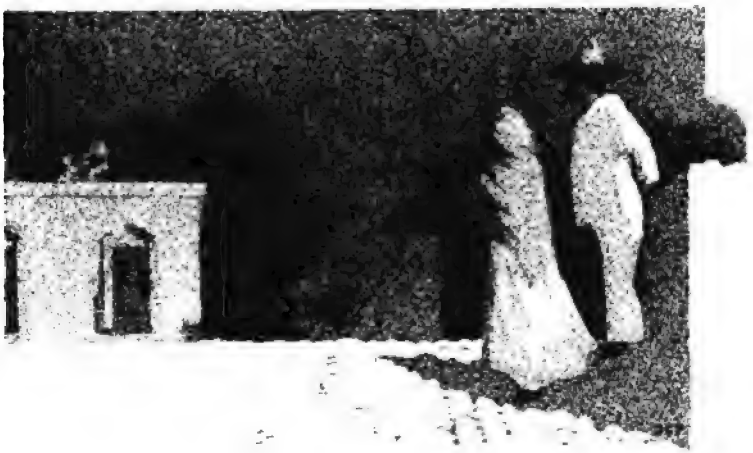


# A MEXICAN Romeo: An Affair of the Heart, by Harold Ballagh. Illustrations by Bessie Collins Pease*

WITNESS if I have not a nature *simpatico* in the extreme!

Here am I, Leandro Bayado, arrived at five feet six inches, and years twenty and three.

I am a Mexican mozo of good looks. How do I know it? It is unnecessary to look into the mirror imported from France that hangs in Don Alfredo's room, although I have done this when that pock-marked mozo Juan was not looking. It is sufficient to gaze into the pool of water two miles from the town and see smiling back at me white teeth, black eyes, curved eyebrows—why not, cannot arched brows smile?

Don Alfredo stalks out upon the corridor of his great house—now Don Alfredo is barely twenty and one—he looks across the patio—that court opened to the sun and rain of

* Written for Short Stories.

heaven, filled with flowering trees and shrubs—and he sees not me, me whom he is eternally ordering about as if he alone were a man, and I a beast. I hear him as he strides around the four sides of the patio. He is provoked, as I can judge by his face; for, of course, the great keyhole in the greater door of the corral is large enough for a man to see a great deal through.

Don Alfredo barely escapes knocking over the plants in their decorated pots, standing upon columns of pottery at each pillar of the corridor. It recalls to me the time that I saw him deliberately ride through the main entrance, and spoil the vista of flowers and plants in pots high and pots low which faced the wide front door. His white stallion, urged by his great spurs, pranced through the whole mass of bloom and crockery no more alarmed than if a bull had been charging him in the ring. You may be perfectly sure that the father of Don Alfredo was out at his hacienda, however. The mother? That is different. She talked some pretty rapid Spanish, and she ordered Juan to buy quickly plants and pots that the desolation might be remedied.

Well, Alfredo comes swinging over the glazed tiles, getting blacker and blacker in the face. The light catches on the silver chains and buttons that glitter from waist to heel upon his skin-tight trousers of cloth, while I, mind you, never possessed any other than a blouse and breeches of white cotton, with in truth a blanket not ugly in color, and a sombrero of decent straw. By the time the door of the corral is reached Alfredo appears like a cloud of thunder. He thrusts open the great door and discovers me—Leandro—industriously sweeping the cobble-stones with a broom of those red twigs that grow in the barancas between the mountains surrounding the town. Alfredo stabs me with a knife-life glance.

"Why did you not answer me?" he says.

"I did not hear you," I reply.

For a fact, he had neither clapped his hands nor called, at which indeed, I had wondered. Doubtless, it was to catch me in a fault he had come upon me without summoning me to him.

"How lazy you are," he says, "the corral not cleaned, the horses filthy. Caramba! Take them to be washed at once."

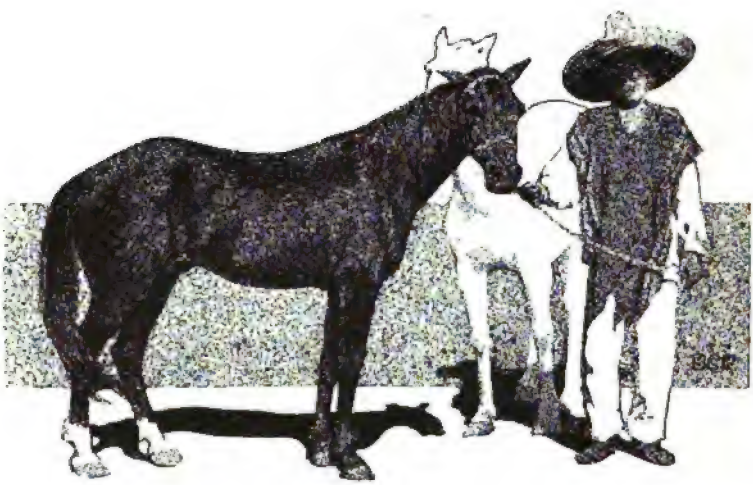
With perfect literalness, grinning at Alfredo's back, I prepare to take the horses to that pool without the town where one washes them—but I leave behind the mules.

Wash horses, indeed! As if the day before they had not been bathed! Pray what does his mightiness do? When he is not ordering me to do this or that, he spends his days playing cards in the cantina, and drinking all strong drinks from Mexican tequila to those fiery liquors of Europe and the United States.

And his nights? You shall hear.

His father, Don Vicente, has a neighbor whom he very much dislikes, Don Fernando.

Both being men of great riches, neither can drive out the other. The retainers of these men, the very vaqueros of



the fields, have tired of their cowboy strife, and the haciendas, with their thousands of peons, each exist in an armed truce. Now the town houses of these men of wealth adjoin. In public the heads of these households salute one another formally, but for many years no words of amity have passed between them, and the younger members ignore each other. All this I learned from the gossip of the kitchen maids and the house mozos. For I am glad to say I was not born upon either hacienda, but I am from Sonora, many leagues away from the abode of the noble Don Alfredo and his even more violent father.

Those evenings of Alfredo?

I come to them. Upon the plaza, where walk in the gloaming, while the band plays, the procession of señoras and señoritas from right to left, and the procession of señors from left to right, while the outside walk is similarly thronged with peons like myself, I have watched, but I have never been able to see any symptom of flirtation between Don Alfredo and the heiress of the adjoining casa.

This señorita, really beautiful, exists not as far as the household of Don Vicente is concerned. But the rest of the world speaks glowingly of her charm and her wealth. Her mozos even love her, for she condescends to them with great kindness. When she returns from a journey she calls each by name and shakes hands. She brings little gifts to the maid servants, whom she does not disdain to embrace after an absence. At the hacienda they adore her; on her saint's day she gives to them a great fiesta, with music of a band and the dancing of the jarabe. Many a caballero "plays bear" under her window. She flirts with them all, but she favors none, so says the market-place.

For myself, I have traveled as far as Mexico City. I have been scorched by the heat of the "hot lands," and I have seen the snows of the Mexican mountains. Therefore, I believe not all I hear. I keep my own eyes open to see what is to be seen. It is true that I have seen nothing unusual about the Señorita Conchita. As a servant of Don Vicente, I cannot strike up a friendship with the mozos of our neighbor. In church I behold the señorita kneeling devoutly, with a gauzy rebozo of black covering her head and shoulders, although dressed otherwise in wonderful and precious garments wrought by the tailors of France.

Nevertheless, I am no fool. Those demure eyelids cover dark eyes; it is not hard to imagine them bestowing glances of fire.

The mystery in the way Don Alfredo disappears in the evening after the band, at ten o'clock, has hushed, explains itself not at all. He goes not then to the cantina of the gentlemen, and he never enters the cantina of the common folk. If an affair of the heart afflict him, some of his mozos would be aware of it They would carry his guitar, they would unbar for him doors, they would await his orders, they would know and they would speak—at least to me. If it were a matter to be concealed, I would be chosen,

for the rest of the mozos are men born upon the hacienda, and they kiss literally the hands of Don Vicente. No, it is purely a mystery, for he remains not in the house.

Now being thirsty, although from the pole on my shoulders hang water-bottles, I stop in the plaza and buy of Nero good pulque. As he pours from his gourd a second glassful, he says to me:

"Leandro, heard you the singular story of ghosts in the house of your neighbor, Don Vicente?"

"No," I gurgle.

"A Dios!" cries Nero, in astonishment. "However, it it is true that enmity like a gulf lies between those households."

"What was the beginning of that strife?" I question.

"There are many stories, and which is the truth? *Quien sabe?* It is said as boys that Don Vicente and Don Fernando 'played bear' to the same señorita. Sit here in the shade of the wall, Leandro, the heat in the middle of the street is great. As queen of the bull-fight, this señorita decorated Don Fernando with a band of ribbon of color precious in the extreme, but as your master bent his head, kneeling before her, for a similar sash, she put upon him an ugly little string of silk of yellow, which signifies 'The engagement is broken.' It might have passed, but the queen smiled wickedly, and the young gentlemen permitted not a moment of the fiesta to slip by without plaguing Don Vicente. Now as the bull-fight had been before the entire population of the town, and the young gentlemen of the

haciendas, amateurs, had thrilled all by their skill and bravery in fighting their own bulls, this public affront was too much for the proud stomach of Don Vicente. In a final moment of exasperation, he stabbed Don Fernando, and it was many days before the wound healed."

"The queen?" asks I.

"Oh!" says Nero, "don't you know? She became the wife of Don Fernando, and the mother of the greatest beauty here—Conchita. Others say the enmity began—"

"Well," says I, yawning, "one such story is enough—but what about the ghosts?"

Nero takes the pole from his shoulder and puts his pulque gourds on the ground. He squats down beside them, and I lean against the wall, hugging my knees, and gazing at my water-bottles. At the house Don Alfredo is probably demanding "Where is Leandro?" "Gone to the fountain for water," they will say. Bah! It is necessary for a man to be amicable in the plaza. An hour more or less is a small matter in life. As Nero is calmly smoking a cigarette, I wait patiently until he speaks.

"It must be true that the house is haunted. The old father of Don Fernando died there of phthisis; perhaps it is he coming back to see how the household is run. Tulita, in whose shop one can buy all things, from flower pots to wood, says that being unable to sleep, she went up to her roof and chancing to look over the neighborhood, she saw a ghostly figure upon the top of Don Fernando's house.

"A Dios!" I cry, surprised.

"It is true," continues Nero; "more than that, the household of Don Fernando have heard the footsteps upon the roof."

"Perhaps some of their people go up there."

"What, after ten o'clock at night, when in small towns most Mexicans are sleeping? Besides, it is unlikely, because there are no steps; it is a flat roof, to be sure, and cemented, but one cannot get at it, except by climbing over the tiles of the roof of the corridor."

It came to me like a vision, that here was my chance of being revenged upon Don Alfredo. I knew almost as if I had seen him that this was the solution of his nightly disappearance. If he had taken me with him, I should have said nothing. What was he doing upon the roof of his

neighbor's house—and that man the enemy of his father? It could not be for robbery! It must be in order to awaken the superstitious fears of the household; perhaps to drive them from the place altogether.

"Now, Nero," says I, "if I were you, I would show my interest by suggesting to the son of Don Fernando that a fierce dog would probably drive away the robber—for a burglar and not a ghost, you may be sure it is."

"Gracias!" cries Nero, picking up his shoulder pole. "I own the very dog needful, and I will sell it to them."

As Nero walks down the pueblo street shrieking: "Pulque! Pulque picadito!" I come home with quick steps, and the dew of great labor stands upon my brow to prove my industry.

"The crowd at the fountain," I declare, in response to the ugly names bestowed upon me by Don Alfredo, who had been waiting for me to follow him upon a ride, "is so great that they push one another, striving for water, and break the water-jars of the weaker."

"And yet," says Alfredo, lifting the corner of his lip, "how wonderful it is that there is not a drop of water upon your clothes!"

Now upon the ride the insults I have to submit to from the tongue of Alfredo cause me to desire with great ragings to plunge into him my knife, but I restrain myself. I am convinced by nightfall, without danger to me, will come my revenge and his annihilation.

By ten o'clock, I am upon the housetop of Tulita—the little Tula of six feet, who sells in her shop all things. and who drinks fiery tequila, and lies upon her roof that her nerves may become composed in sleep, and I wait there patiently.

Presently I see the red and long stringy hair of Tulita, as it streams over her green eyes. She is mounting to the roof, and the full moon bathes her in a radiance ludicrously out of place in the case of such an ugly woman.

"Sit down, little Tula," I softly say.

"Si, is it you, Leandro? Look you also for the ghost?"

Tula sits down upon the petate of straw which is often her bed.

"I am nervous," she says; "tell me, what medicine is good to make sleep come?"

As I look at her twitching mouth, and her face flushed from drink, I say amiably:

"Tequila is not good for the nerves, little Tula."

"On the contrary," says Tula, obstinately, "I find it very good for me. But that poor little Conchita, I wonder if Cecilia has been able to quiet her."

"What is the matter with Conchita?"

"Oh, she is secretly in her own room in a state of nerves and tears, of walking and of hand-wringing, and no one can conceive why."

"How then do you know?"

"Cecilia, her maid, ran to me privately, out of the back gate, for a quieting medicine for her mistress."

"Did you give her tequila?" says I, grinning.

"No, I gave her green leaves of bruja to be placed upon the temples, and I told Cecilia to tie a cloth wet with alcohol about her mistress's head."

"Has anything happened over at Don Fernando's to throw the Señorita Conchita into such a state?"

"Nothing, except that her brother Cesar to-day bought the fiercest dog in the town and put him—where do you suppose?"

"On the roof," whisper I, bending toward Tula for in this town even one's voice breaks the wonderful silence of the night.

"Si, señor," murmurs Tula, "a dog to meet á ghost! No wonder my nerves permit me no sleep!"

My whole body begins to prickle, as if bitten by a thousand little ants. What will the dog meet? A ghost? I cross myself at the idea. A robber? I think not. Don Alfredo? I am reasonably sure that will happen, but I cannot conceive why this result should throw the señorita into such a passion of dread. Probably she fears her grandfather's ghost as much as she feared the old man in life—if one can believe report.

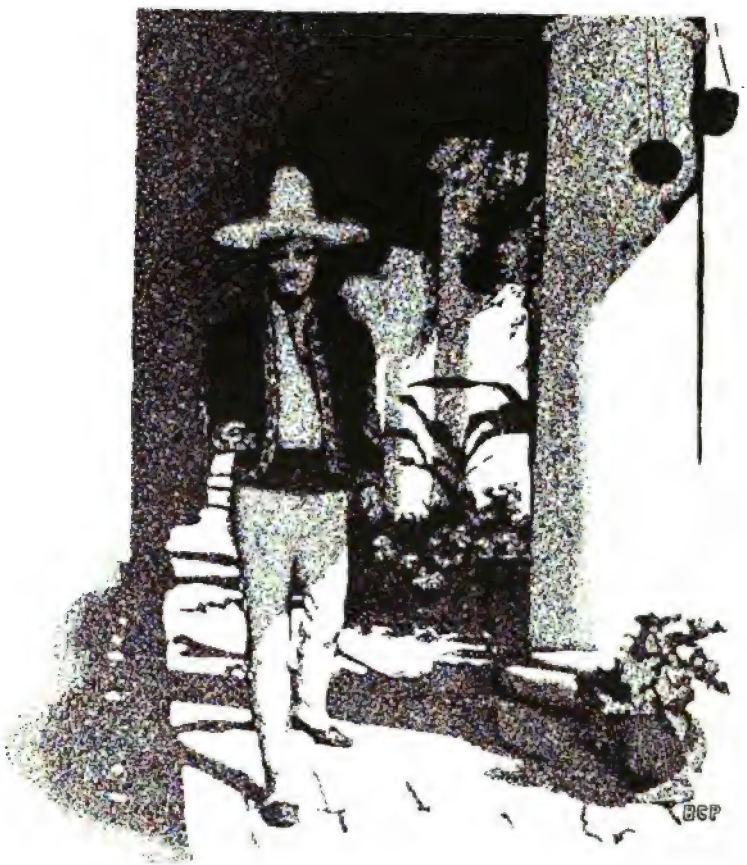
Suddenly Tula and I become stone.

Before us, moving sedately and in mysterious silence, passes a figure over the flat roof of Don Vicente. The distance is too great to recognize the features, but the alert, haughty pose of the head, the lithe grace suggest to me Alfredo. Caramba! What a handsome devil of a gentleman he is!

The moonlight floods the patio of Don Fernando; one can hear the tinkle of his fountain, and the hoarse cooing of amorous pigeons. There are no lights in the house, but I fancy I make out silent, waiting figures in the hide chairs within the corridors.

"The-ghost! Do-you-see-him?" ejaculates Tula, tremulously.

"Hush!" I whisper, fiercely.



The suspense begins to tell upon me.

Alfredo—or who else is it?—reaches the barrier that separates his azotea from that of his hereditary enemy. He leaps lightly over the dividing wall, and upon the second encounters the blood-thirsty dog of Nero, the pulque seller.

"Valgame Dios!" cries Tula.

"Shut up!" I howl.

The sound of the man and the dog battling fiercely on the roof rouses, as by magic, the household of Don Fernando.

A woman's muffled scream passes unnoticed. Ladders and roof in an instant are alive with armed men rushing toward the frantically struggling combatants. In a final mighty effort Alfredo frees himself and tries to scale the barrier, but the pursuing men throw themselves upon him.

"We have the robber now," shouts a voice over the parapet of the roof.

"All right, Cesar, take him to the carcel," cries Don Fernando from the patio.

"That is Alfredo," I say to Tula.

"Ai! They go down by the side," says Tula.

Realizing the import of this I sprang down through Tula's shop to the street, and am at the police station as the others arrive.

What a sight!

Don Alfredo truly, but only the clown of a gentleman. Clothes in tatters, blood and dirt, scratches and bites make him unrecognizable.

"This man," says Don Cesar to the chief of police, "is a burglar caught by my dog upon the roof of my house."

"What is your name?" asks the Jefe of the prisoner.

"Alfredo Estevan Figuero," says my master, with a lofty head, while I smother my laughter with my serape.

Every man falls away from him as if he had said he were St. Stephen himself.

"What were you doing upon the roof of Don Fernando?" asks the Jefe.

"I was taking a walk," says Alfredo, looking straight into the Jefe's eyes.

"On another man's roof!" says the Jefe. "Don Cesar thought you were a burglar."

"I very certainly am not," says Alfredo.

"The dog thought so," says the Jefe.

The crowd looking upon my master titters.

An angry flush climbs up to Alfredo's eyes. He sees me in the crowd and stabs me with a glance. I get behind him; he is not armed, for he used no knife on the dog, but I prefer to take no chances. Silly for a man to go abroad

unarmed. The thought must have passed through Alfredo's mind also.

"If I were a robber," he says, sarcastically, "I would have arms upon me."

"Upon the roof of an enemy's house unarmed! It is mysterious," says a man in the crowd unguardedly. Both Don Cesar and Don Alfredo look suspiciously blank.

The Jefe knowing the station of Alfredo, makes no motion to have him searched. He accepts his word.

"Don Alfredo," he says, "have the candor to explain your actions and doubtless the incident can be forthwith closed."

"I am sorry," says Alfredo, "that I must decline to make any other explanation than I have."

"In that case," says Don Cesar, fingering his pistol-holster nervously, "I must—"

"My soul!" calls a voice, "brother mine, do not threaten him. He cannot explain—but I can!"

I jump, as I recognize the Señorita Conchita. A rebozo is over her head, and her maid Cecilia is beside her.

I open a way for them from the door to the front.

"Cesar," she says, in a low voice, embracing him, "Don Alfredo is my lover. I feared the disapproval of my family. We met upon the roof of the house—but this he cannot explain to others. To-night—"

The Jefe's eyes smile, though his lips fold close.

Don Alfredo is pale and red by turns. Don Cesar is speechless with astonishment. At opposite doors stand the grizzled enemies of a lifetime, Don Fernando and Don Vicente.

Looking up and seeing her father's eyes upon her, Conchita gets no further than "to-night," gasps, and clutches at Cesar's arm, despairingly.

"Well, Señor Jefe," says Cesar, suddenly, "do me the favor to forget the trouble I have given you. There was an unfortunate mistake, my neighbor was unknown to my dog."

"Also, Señor Jefe," says Alfredo, "accept my apologies. It is an affair to be settled out of court."

"On the contrary," amicably growls Don Fernando, stepping forward, "affairs of the heart can only be settled in court."

"You consent—is it possible?" stammers Don Alfredo.

"To whatever your honorable father permits," says Don Fernando.

"If my son has stolen your daughter's affections," begins Don Vicente in almost humble accents, "we can only crave your forgiveness. It seems love and marriage—"

Don Alfredo falls on his knees and kisses his father's hand, while Conchita throws herself upon Don Fernando's bosom.

I walk away, knowing that my revenge has miscarried, but that I have seen the end, if not the beginning, of a famous family feud.

# THE Last Combat: A Gladiatorial Story, by Jean Richepin. Translated from the French by Linda de K. Fulton. Illustrations by R. T. Schultz*

OF all my gladiator stories, the greatest is the one which tells of the tragic end of the two Labrax, both famous gladiators, the son for having founded a new school called "la fulgurante"; the father for having been the last and

*Translated for Short Stories.

greatest representative of the old school called "la tourbillonnante."

Sports, like books, have their season of popularity; the populace never rests long contented with any one thing; there is an inherent restlessness in humanity that ever seeks variety, and to-day it is the new school which prevails; but this decree of fate has to my mind been a little unjust in condemning to oblivion a school whose greatest exponent died triumphantly upholding his principles, and in the apotheosis of his art.

It is well to be impartial in such grave matters, and so I will concede that the method used and partly originated by the younger man is better adapted to modern tastes, which incline toward scientific rules, and perhaps this method may develop the muscles in a shorter time; but I still maintain that never has it produced a gladiator comparable in beauty to Labrax the elder.

The only fault he could be accused of was that he owed more to his method than to his nature. But we are told that the gods themselves favored this method in a marked degree, and therefore we are sustained by the immortals, particularly Mars and Venus.

But a truce to philosophy, and to my story:

Labrax the elder, after fifteen years of uninterrupted and brilliant victories, had retired from the arena, his breast covered with jeweled medals and with the little white scepter which designated the gladiator emeritus. Since the day when he had been publicly proclaimed the King of Gladiators, his son, who succeeded him, had easily held first place, thanks to his father's careful training, and thanks also to the wonderful rapidity and force of his famous right-hand blows, and to the fact that the few remaining followers of the old school were not his equals in strength.

However that may have been, it was generally conceded that the younger Labrax had no peer. His followers constantly increased. He had many imitators and flatterers, and finally all this adulation turned his head a little. He forgot what he owed to his father, and became so puffed up that he said one day to a circle of admiring friends:

"There is one thing I much regret, that is my father's age. If he were not over fifty, I would challenge him; for then all the world would know that there is but one Labrax."

This speech was repeated to the elder man, who only laughed and treated the whole matter with contempt.

Irritated by this open ridicule, Labrax the son made several slighting remarks about his sire, and even dared to insinuate that in the light of present scientific methods the elder man would stand no chance whatever.

This so aroused the father's pride that he said:

"Enough! I will resign my scepter for a day, and re-enter the arena, in order to give that saucy lad of mine a lesson that he will not soon forget."

When his determination was made known to the Roman public, the greatest excitement prevailed, and on the day appointed for the unique combat more than 300,000 spectators eagerly awaited them in the great amphitheater.

Labrax the son first entered the arena, clad in shining armor. His bearing was proud and confident, and he seemed to anticipate an easy victory; but it was afterwards remembered that his armor seemed to weigh him down, and the women present recalled their disappointment because of his closed visor.

Entirely different was the impression produced by the entrance of the father. His costume was of white samite, one shapely leg was adorned with a fringe of bronzed metal, while his flanks were protected by a girdle of black leather with silver scales; his body, naked to the waist, showing his wonderful muscular development, was adorned only with his medals, which hung from his brawny neck; his face was uncovered, and on his head was a light helmet surmounted by a scarlet feather.

He seemed a veritable Mars; but Mars under the guidance of Venus, for his graceful and supple body, which age had not in the least impaired, seemed made as much for love as war.

His appearance was so debonair and handsome that all the women, even the vestals, immediately shouted in admiration, and raised their thumbs to signify their wish that the combat should not take place.

Labrax responded with a graceful gesture of thanks and admiration which subtly conveyed to every woman that he took their token, not for pity, but as a sign that he still retained all his youthful charm and virility.

They understood, and shouted and laughed, while he put himself on guard and awaited the combat.

Before the first round was over, every one knew that Labrax the son had not the ghost of a chance for victory; and though none could deny that his right-handed blows, the cleanness of his attacks, and his rapidity deserved great praise, the play of his father was so much more admirable that all eyes were upon him. He had never been greater; he surpassed all former glories. It was a marvelous spectacle, and the immense multitude shouted themselves hoarse with enthusiasm.

The father surpassed the son, not only in skill, but in manly beauty, and all the vigor of early youth seemed to return to him.

Suddenly with a quick thrust he wounded and disarmed his opponent, and the younger Labrax fell to the ground.

At this hundreds of the spectators turned down their thumbs. It was the death warrant.

"Raise your thumbs! "shouted Labrax the elder. "I refuse to kill my son!"

"Then you will be a false gladiator!" cried the vanquished man.

In the meantime the shouting grew tumultuous, and on every side were heard cries of "Strike! Strike!"

They howled and yelled like wild beasts, and the voice of the great Cæsar himself could be heard shouting imperiously above the crowd:

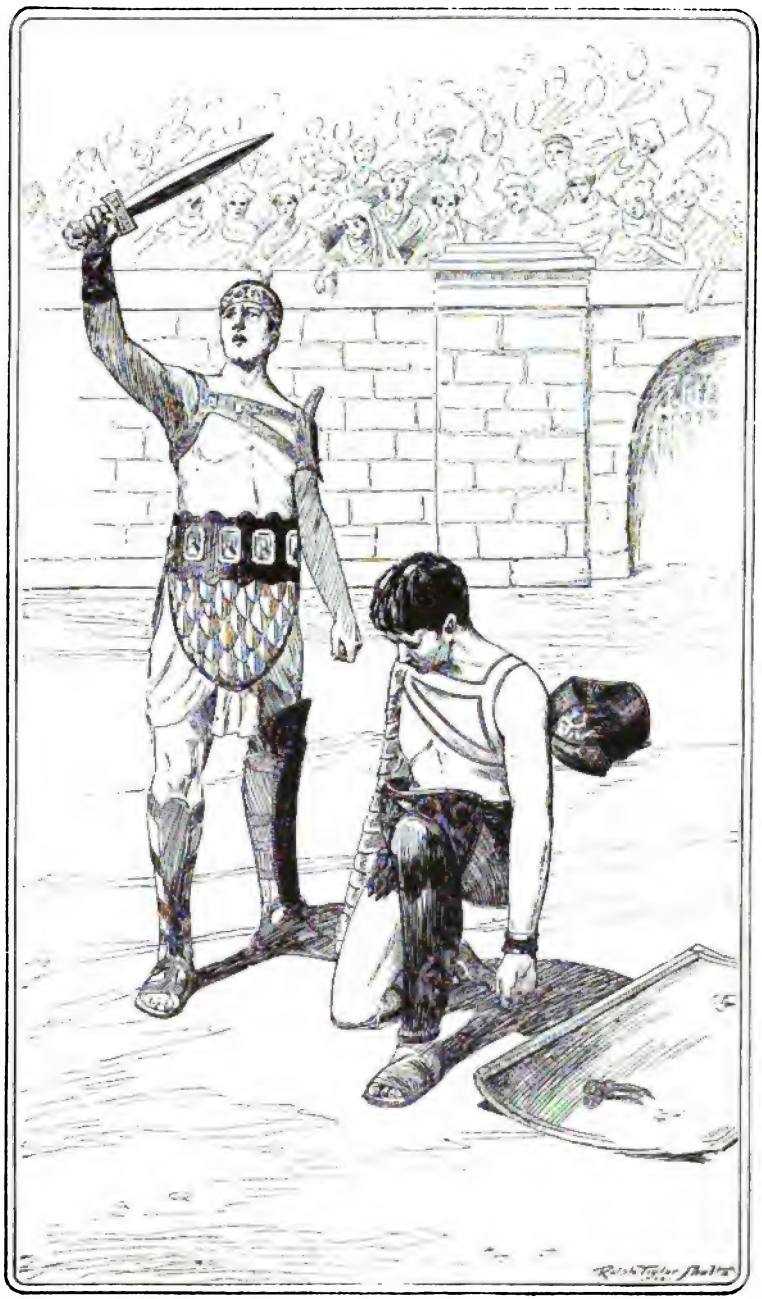
"Strike! Strike!"

The younger Labrax on his knees taunted his sire, saying:

"If thou strikest not, thou art no gladiator, but a poltroon." He unfastened his helmet, loosened his armor, bared his breast, and repeated:

"If thou strikest not, thou art no gladiator."

"Thou liest!" cried the father proudly, yet with a great



sob, which made his breast heave and shook all the medals so dearly won.

"Thou liest," he said. "I am the King of Gladiators!"

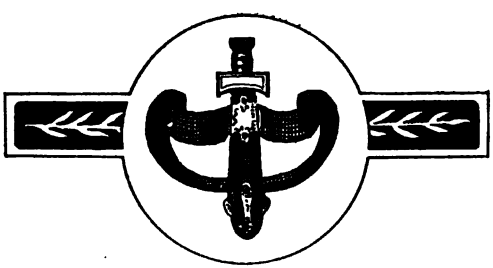
And brandishing his sword high in air, then lowering the point, he plunged it into his son's body, crying aloud so that all might hear:

"For the glory of the Gladiators!"

Then standing over the prostrate body, he addressed Cæsar:

"O Emperor, I have done thy bidding to uphold the glory of the arena, but having slain my son, I can no longer live!" And crying, "To the manes of my child!" he fell upon his sword.

Thus perished the two Labrax.



# THE Greater Claim: A Story of the Far West, by Kathryne Wilson*

THE door of Miss Mandy's hotel was slammed shut with a bang against the fierce onslaughts of an icy blast that raged up and down the little canyon like some mad thing. And within the warm precincts of Wolf Creek's only hostelry came Bob Wells, Billy King, and Legs—conductor, brakeman and fireman respectively of train "54" west-bound—accompanied by a man unknown to Miss Mandy.

A Montana blizzard was in progress, and the trip over the divide had been a wild one. Theophilus Willard was the only passenger in the caboose, and the exigencies of the occasion, together with the frank unceremoniousness that charterizes the average Westerner, soon involved passenger and crew in relations more or less familiar, in which a common interest in a stopping place for the night played a conspicuous part. So at the end of the journey the stranger was guided to the hotel by the trainmen, to whom he was none the less interesting when it was learned that he was an "Exponent of the Science of Palmistry."

Strangers were neither so common nor so uncommon at Miss Mandy's as to interfere with the attitude of good-fellowship that prevailed among her boarders. The through passenger trains rarely stopped at Wolf Creek, but freight trains changed crews at that point, and it followed that Miss Mandy's patrons were confined to those few whose occupation made them frequenters of the town. The dining-room, with its big fireplace, was an alluring sitting-room after supper, and the men deemed it a special favor when Miss Mandy came in after the dishes were washed, to ask the news from either

*Written for Short Stories.

end of the division. To-night the advent of a "fortune-teller" promised an unusual diversion and the proprietress was the object of numerous importunings.

"Come in and have your fortune told, Miss Mandy," called Billy King, when the meal was over, the table cleared, and chairs were drawn up before the fire.

"Nonsense!" said a voice from the kitchen, where the clatter of dishes spoke for itself.

"Aw! Come on, Miss Mandy," urged Legs, "this feller'll tell you anything you want to know, from when you were born to who your fate's goin' to be."

"Heaven forbid!" exclaimed Miss Mandy, "either one's sunthin' I wouldn't want told in public."

"Well, then, he'll tell you you're goin' to be a rich widdo' and when you're goin' to see the man," interposed Billy.

Miss Mandy appeared in the doorway, wiping a huge, thick crockery plate.

"Now, Billy King, you knows well's I do there ain't a man in Montana 'ud have me, even s'posin' I was willin' to risk takin' one, which I ain't. When a woman gits 's old's me, the best thing she c'n do is to warn the young ones against makin' fools o' themselves."

"Now, Miss Mandy! Don't be too hard on us. But come and let his nobs, here, see how many lies he c'n tell."

"Oh, well! For the sake of a little amusement, maybe, when I'm done with the dishes," and she disappeared again. If anyone had hinted to Miss Mandy that she was superstitious, she would have denied the implication with spirit. She, Mandy Hodge, a sensible spinster of forty-nine, whose indefinitely great-grandfather had been a Puritan of the strictest type—she, who had been a God-fearing woman, doing her duty as she found it, and being, among other things, eminently practical—she superstitious? Never!

Miss Mandy probably had no suspicion that that same Puritanical influence, the germs of which had been planted in her heart almost three hundred years ago, might have been at work when she reluctantly consented to have her palm read. If asked her ideas concerning the doctrine of predestination, she would, in all probability, have said she did not believe in it. Twenty-five years of pioneer life with its vicissitudes of fortune had taught her to believe man to be alone responsible for his own destiny. Yet there still

existed within her a suggestion of a doubt concerning the subject. It had not yet been proved false. Consequently the elements of superstition and curiosity which the suggestion of the palmist had awakened aided in setting aside her rational opinions, and she yielded.

When she came in a little later, there was a general movement among the boarders toward comfortable positions, in anticipation of a little amusement.

"Now tell 'er a good one," cautioned Billy, from his corner, where he sat with seat tipped back and a pipe in his mouth.

"You can't come any half-way tactics with Miss Mandy," remarked Bob Wells, who had straddled a chair with the back in front of him, while Legs lay flat on the floor before the fireplace.

"If I just tell her about her character, it's bound to be a good one," said the palmist, gallantly, as he looked into the upturned palm.

"There ain't no use o' your tellin' me my character," interposed Miss Mandy, "I know that 'bout's well 's it can be known. What I want t' know is what's in store for me."

"All right, but I must tell you a little about what you know to be true, or you won't believe me." Theophilus' manner could be very smooth upon occasion. Just now he seemed to be musing over what he saw in Miss Mandy's palm. "You have a very interesting hand," he remarked, as he spread out the fingers one by one, bent them backward, and turned the hand over, "a well-marked hand, and an easy one to read. In the first place, you were born in New England."

"How do you know?" asked Miss Mandy.

"The palm is an open book," the scientific palmist replied. "That dialect don't often deceive me," he thought. "You came West some time ago."

"Yes, with father," vouchsafed Miss Mandy.

"Don't tell me anything," said Theophilus, deprecatingly, "I must do this alone. You've been West perhaps—twenty years." Theophilus had seen something of the world, and was from necessity, a good judge of character. He had sized up Miss Mandy with the eye of a professional and he was good at guessing.

"You have never been home since you came, though you have relatives still in your native town—near relatives."

Miss Mandy thought of her sister, and the nieces and nephews she had never seen, and she was a little surprised that he had come so near the truth.

"Your father has been dead about two years, I would say. He was somewhere near eighty years old." Miss Mandy wore black, and the rest was easy. "I see the sign of a love affair here—some twenty-five years ago—an unsuccessful one."

The amused, somewhat tolerant smile with which Miss Mandy had listened heretofore was gone now, and in its place was a look of perplexity. "Does he guess all this?" she asked herself. At the mention of the love affair, the blood pulsed in her faded cheek for a moment, but was gone again by the time she recovered enough to laugh skeptically. But the crew of "54" saw it and were touched. She was so little and so alone.

The "exponent" was proceeding in an even voice, only interrupted by the occasional crackling of the fire, and the whistle of the wind around the corners of the house.

"Your fate line is somewhat uneven. Let me see your other hand, please. Hm! Still more broken. You began your existence in fairly favorable surroundings, and had you remained in your birthplace, your life would have been comparatively easy. You lived on a farm," and he looked at her quickly. She nodded, and he went on. "But you came into a strange country of your own will, and your life has been one of ups and downs. However, you have been fairly content and prosperous, particularly in the last five years.

"Now, as to your character, your will power is well developed and you are decidedly practical, though your imagination and a more or less mystical tendency balance that quality. Your heart line is very even and pronounced, denoting sympathy, generosity, and the faculty of feeling intensely. Your domestic qualities are marked. The head line is not so long nor so deep as that of the heart, but it is, nevertheless, the sign of a good, clear intellect. Your appreciation of the arts is somewhat limited, though your love of the beautiful is quite evident. You are something of a philosopher, and not given to worrying. Your talents are along the industrial line." Theophilus thought this rather neat, as he smoothed his shiny black hair caressingly. His

stock phrases were running nimbly off his tongue now, his manner as professional as possible.

By this time Miss Mandy was observing him intently. She was wondering how he could know her so well. She glanced suspiciously at Bob Wells, at Billy King, and at Legs. But the expression of interest on the faces of all three convinced her that they were as impressed as she by this exhibition of power.

Billy's cigar had gone out and was being held tightly between his teeth. Legs was staring hard into the fireplace, and the conductor was leaning over the back of his chair with his eyes fixed on the palmist. They all knew Miss Mandy so well—had known her for five years, and here was an utter stranger telling her things they didn't know at all!

"With the exception of a few unimportant details," continued the palmist, "that is—about all I see concerning your past and your character. Now we'll find what the future has for you." A slight hitching of his chair as a preliminary induced a trifle more interest from his audience.

"I see a journey of some length in prospect for you, and ——yes, here is the indication of a change of some kind—soon. Your health will always be fairly good, and financially, the rest of your life will be comfortable." He could not know of the earnings of five years sewed up in the lining of Miss Mandy's old alpaca, thought the spinster. "From now on your line of fate is quite smooth and even, though it has been very irregular heretofore. However—ah!" and he bent lower over her hand. For a few moments the sharp crackle of the sleety wind against the panes was the only sound. Then—

"This is quite peculiar," vouchsafed the palmist, slowly and impressively. Again there was silence—a silence that seemed interminable, while the reader continued to study intently. When several moments had elapsed and no word was spoken, Miss Mandy moved a little in her chair. She was growing a trifle nervous.

At length, after a close scrutiny, the prophet seemed to have solved the riddle to his own satisfaction, and lifting his head, spoke to the company in general.

"I find an unusual combination here," he said. "The fate line, after running smoothly for perhaps an inch, suddenly shoots into the life line—and at that point both—end

abruptly." He paused impressively. The conductor and brakeman glanced at each other. The fireman took his eyes from the bed of hot embers and looked at Miss Mandy. Miss Mandy regarded the palmist curiously, and the palmist dropped his eyes to the puzzling lines in the hand.

"You are about forty-nine years of age," he volunteered, at last.

"Yes," said Miss Mandy, simply. She was not ashamed of it.

"These lines—end—at the point—which represents—your fiftieth birthday." The Delphian oracle could not have spoken more ominously. Miss Mandy began to understand.

"I see also the sign of a quadruped—evidently significant when near the indication of an accident, as in this case."

"On my fiftieth birthday," mused Miss Mandy. There was another eloquent silence. The wind whistled dismally down the chimney, and added to the intensity of the moment—an intensity that was its own undoing, for Miss Mandy, growing conscious of it all at once, seemed to recover herself. "Well," she said, philosophically, as she rose, "my time's got to come some day, so it may's well come then," and she laughed a little.

The spell was broken. Billy King's chair came to the floor with a thump, and as he walked to the stairway, he observed in a tone that was not altogether amiable, that the palmist would never suffer for lack of imagination. Legs got slowly to his feet, and shuffled towards the door, but as he passed Bob Wells, he remarked succinctly, "That feller's a damn fool to tell her all that rot."

The palmist rose with the others. He seemed to realize he had said too much, but it would not do to go back on his reading. So he attempted to conciliate matters a little by saying jocularly, "There's a chance that I was mistaken on that last, Miss Mandy. If I had a magnifying glass to see the smaller lines with I could tell you better. Sorry I left mine back in Helena. But I'd advise you to look out for quadrupeds, all the same, on your fiftieth birthday."

"Well, my life has taught me one thing," responded Miss Mandy, "take 'em all in all, most quadrupeds I've seen have been a heap more trustworthy than lots o' bipeds I've encountered." There was a general laugh at this sally, as the crew of "54" and the Exponent of Scientific Palmistry after a hearty good-night to Miss Mandy tramped upstairs to bed.

But the little figure in black sat by the fire for a long time that night. The wind moaned outside, and the snow drifted in through the cracks around the door. The chunks in the fireplace sank, one by one, into a bed of trembling red coals. The glow grew less and less bright, and slowly a white ash formed where the flickering flames had been. The chill from the blizzard began to pervade the room.

At last Miss Mandy started. "What's getting into you, anyway, Mandy Hodge? Gather together your scattered old senses and go to bed. I'm ashamed of ye." And she locked the door, took up the lamp and went to her room.

The next morning after the crew of "54" had gone east on it's run, and Theophilus Willard had taken a west-bound freight, Miss Mandy stood in her front door and surveyed the scene before and around her. The blizzard had spent its force in the night, and the air was marvelously clear and sparkling. It fairly tinkled with the cold. The snow, dry as powder, had drifted in wave-like undulations around the corners of the buildings, and against the station platform. The track was submerged in some places, and swept perfectly bare in others.

Wolf Creek boasted ten buildings—Miss Mandy's hotel, the store, two saloons, five dwelling shacks and the station house. A street ran through the town, separating the railroad appurtenances from the other buildings, which were scattered here and there in defiance of order or system.

The hotel, store, and saloons were modeled after the same style of architecture, the former differing from the other two in the matter of a second story. The front wall, the bald-faced appearance of which was relieved by two windows and a door, continued upward beyond the pointed roof like a very erect pompadour. The store used this superfluous space as a means of informing the public that this was the property of Davis Bros., "Dealers in hardware, groceries, boots and shoes, flour, feed, dry goods, notions, and general merchandise." A board tacked above the entrance announced that it was also the post-office. The one word "Hotel" adorned the space above Miss Mandy's door, the size of the letters rivalled only by those over the two saloons. All save the station house and its belongings were devoid of paint. But these were adorned with a coat of

dark red set off by green trimmings, the trade mark of the company. This was Wolf Creek, Montana, thirty-five miles west of the Rocky Mountain tunnel, on the Northern Pacific Railroad.

Miss Mandy stood there surveying it with eyes that seemed suddenly open to things she had never seen before. How piteously small, how desperately monotonous it was, this little way station on the road to Somewhere, dignified only by the tiniest of dots on the official time tables. Passenger trains fled past it with a shriek, as if the mere suggestion of a stop there were maddening. The only glimpse Miss Mandy had of the world was that afforded by the tired, listless faces in the windows as the express swung into view and was gone in a whirl of snow. But she thought of those faces all day, till they became her friends, and she imagined she knew the story of every one.

Her eyes wandered to the mountains around and above her, their sides covered with needle-pointed pines outlined sharply against the background of snow, with here and there bare, jagged rocks jutting out boldly in relief from the sinuous slopes. She looked long and lovingly at them, and drew a slow, deep breath "Ah! but *they* are magnificent!" she thought.

Then she gazed eastward beyond where the track narrowed to a point and was lost in a bend; farther and farther beyond, where the craggy, snow-capped peaks of the divide rose majestically into the incomparable blue of a Montana sky. Something of their grandeur and immensity seemed to envelope her, and made her suddenly conscious of her own insignificance. She became all at once aware of an overpowering sense of helplessness, of an impulse to seek protection from someone, and with the realization of her impotence came a flood of loneliness that she had never experienced before. She thought of what lay beyond those peaks—the desolate, undulating plains of eastern Montana and Dakota, on through the weird horrors of the Bad Lands to the Middle West, with its immense fields of waving grain; then the thickly settled East with its great cities, and finally, New England, her New England, and its rolling green hills, its woods, its spacious old farm houses and picturesque meadows! Twenty-five years was a long time to have stayed away from it.

Her fiftieth birthday—a journey—to Ellen and the chil-

dren—why not? An accident! Her fiftieth birthday! The thoughts came crowding and jostling one another, and in sudden bewilderment she sat down on the door step to think a little more clearly.

Suppose it should come true, what the palmist had said. Suppose she should—die, on her fiftieth birthday. She pictured to herself what it would be like here. Bob Wells and Billy King and Legs would be there, of course, and the engineer's wife would take charge of—things. The two or three other women whose lot had been cast at Wolf Creek along with their husband's would come and do what they could. And that would be all. There would be a little procession and another mound over there at the foot of the mountain among the pines. Yes, she'd like to rest over there—if it weren't so lonely. Even her father was not there, for she had sent him home. Home! The tears welled up in Miss Mandy's eyes.

There was no real reason why she never had gone. She had lingered because she had come to love this great, boundless, big-hearted West—because there had never seemed any plausible reason why she should go. She called herself a Westerner now, she had been a part of it for so long, and experienced so much.

As she sat there, every detail of her life came before her vividly. She saw herself as a girl on the farm in Massachusetts until her sister's marriage and her mother's death left her in charge of everything, and changed her in a year to a woman whose last thought was of herself. Then came her father's determination to come West, and she could not let him go alone, she who was all he had left. And finally, there had been the heart-breaking good-bye to—*him*. Now there spread before her imagination a panorama of events—the long journey across the continent; the rush to the mines, from Utah to Colorado, from Colorado to Wyoming and Montana, now here, now there; the Indian wars, when she had been huddled in a building for days, together with women and children, waiting with bated breath for the terror to come, while the men stood guard without. And afterward there was more drifting. From Virginia City they had gone to Helena, at that time Last Chance Gulch, and thence to Butte, winning and losing, enjoying and suffering. At length when the fever had burned out to some degree and her father

had become too old to wander any more, they had somehow settled down here at Wolf Creek, where she had kept the hotel and earned a living for the two of them. Two years before she had closed her father's eyes—and yet she stayed on. Ellen had always seemed so far away. And now in six months it would be her fiftieth birthday.

Of a sudden she stood up, and, looking at the pine covered sides of the great mound opposite, she spoke as if in defiance of it.

"I will! I'll go! And if I'm killed on my fiftieth birthday, I'll at least be at home." There was a relief in expressing it in words.

She almost expected a denunciation to be hurled back at her from the mountain, for she stood there some moments, staring at it. Then drying her eyes hurriedly on her gingham apron, she went into the house.

For six months Miss Mandy made and executed plans with scrupulous regard to details. She consulted time tables and decided to leave Wolf Creek five days before her birthday, so that her arrival home would come upon that date. She would go in the day coach and take a supply of eatables in a basket. She would mend up her old, but best, dress, and send to Butte for some nice cashmere to make a new one. She would fix herself a neat little bonnet out of some old velvet she had, and make a few other little necessaries. And as she sat sewing she grew into the habit of picturing the whole scene as it would occur when she reached Ferndale. John would meet her at the station with the buckboard, and they would drive out to the farm. The thought sent a little thrill of fear through her. A buckboard presupposed a horse, a horse was a quadruped, and the palmist had said—but nonsense! Why should she pay so much attention to what the palmist had said? If her time was to come then, it would come, and that's all there was to it. Besides, John's meeting her with the buckboard would give her the chance to prove the truth or fallacy of the palmist's words. The desire to satisfy her curiosity was almost as potent a factor in forming her decisions as was her anxiety to be home. So from a little superstitious feeling of dread, her attitude changed to one of eagerness, and she looked forward to the arrival with less fear than joy.

Billy King thought Miss Mandy seemed preoccupied, or

absent-minded, or something. He didn't know just what it was, but he felt a difference. Bob said he believed she was worrying over that fool fortune teller's nonsense, but Legs remarked that he'd seen her smile to herself once, so he guessed she didn't feel very much cut up. It was not till Miss Mandy told them of the intended visit, a week before the time of her departure, that they understood.

She could not tell them before. It was her own little secret that she guarded almost jealously. She wanted to think about it and nurse it and plan for it without any rude interference, however well meant it might be. She was too selfish to share it with even her best friends—too wise, perhaps. But at length she felt they ought to know it, now that the time was so near, she owed it to them; and when she told her plan, with her little wrinkled face almost youthful in its eager anticipation, she expected something different from her listeners than the silence that fell upon them. She looked from one to the other for a word of approval or encouragement, but none came. Bob Wells gazed intently at the toe of his shoe. Billy grew suddenly grave and stared out the window, while Legs strode carelessly out of the room and disappeared around the corner of the station house. To the minds of all three came the remembrance of a stormy night six months ago, and this seemed the first step in the fulfilment of the prophecy spoken then. No allusion was made to it, however, and after a few commonplace remarks, Bob and Billy sauntered out and left Miss Mandy in a vague state of uneasiness.

It was May now, the most fascinating month of the year in the Rocky Mountains. One could almost hear the shoots pop out of the moist earth, and see the green buds grow into slender stalks. The very air seemed to teem with new life and quiver with latent energy. The clumps of willow and quaking asp along the creek, the new shoots on the hemlock, the baby pine trees nestled near their haughty parents—all mingled in masses of a dozen pastel shades of green and new yellow. The jutting rocks on the mountain sides seemed to renew their pink and brown tints, and way up in the gulleys, unkissed by the rays of the sun, streaks of snow remained as a suggestion of the winter just gone. The highest peaks were still snow-capped, awaiting the warmth of the July days.

Miss Mandy drank it all in as she had done every spring for five years. Annually she took a greater delight than before in this reawakening, and each springtime seemed more beautiful than the last. But a picture of New England as it must be now, came to her mind, and she was vaguely conscious of a voluntary putting away of a half formed thought that she did not attempt to define.

A week went by, in which she made her final preparations. The hotel was rented to one of the saloon men whose wife would manage it as an adjunct to his business. She could not bring herself to sell it outright. Bob brought her time tables, looked up the fares and planned the whole trip to the smallest detail. Her instructions were all written out and folded up in her hand bag, so she could not possibly make a mistake. She would go as far as Garrison with the crew of "54." There she would buy her ticket to St. Paul and board the Atlantic Express.

Just before she went to bed the night before she was to go, she sat down and made her will. It was not confused with aforesaids, herebys, wherefores, and subsequentlys, but it enumerated all of Miss Mandy's possessions, from the hotel to her hand bag, and directed that they be given to her sister and her sister's children. When this was done, Miss Mandy gave a little sigh of relief and crept into bed.

She was up with the sun the next morning and fussed about excitedly, taking out and putting back things in her hand-bag, running up and down stairs and into every room to see that all was in order; and when the new manager came over about six o'clock to take charge, Miss Mandy showed her over the hotel a dozen times, in spite of the woman's assurances that she already knew it as well as Miss Mandy. She took a delight in this last inspection of her possessions. She wanted to impress the picture of it upon her memory so she could never forget it, for it was all she would have, now.

Billy and Bob came after the trunk about six-thirty and hoisted it onto the rear platform of the caboose. After that Miss Mandy put on her bonnet and cape, took her satchel and basket, and made a last tour of the house, straightening a chair here, rearranging a pillow there. At the front door she spread the rag-carpet mat out carefully and walked over it, then turned to shake hands with the new manager. Her

throat pained her with the lump that was there, and she spoke no word of good-bye, but hurried away across the road, up the station platform and into the caboose of "54," too confused to notice whether it was Billy or the station master who helped her in. She set her bag and basket down, and after a moment went out on the platform of the car. In a little group near the step stood the engineer's wife, with two or three other women, Mr. Davis of the store, the station agent, and Bob Wells, and when Miss Mandy saw them all there, her best and only friends, her courage all at once gave way. With a sudden rush of tears, she retreated into the caboose.

For a few minutes she sobbed softly, and with her tears came the pent up and but half understood misery that had been aching her heart these last six months. She realized now all that this meant to her, and for the first time she knew that she really expected to end her life in five days. She was looking her last upon her friends, Wolf Creek, the mountains, the West—this frank, free-handed, easy-going West that had sustained her for twenty-five years.

Presently there was a jolt, a whistle shrieked somewhere ahead, a bell clanged warningly, and in a moment the red and green station was slipping past the windows. With quivering lips Miss Mandy stood in the door. The little group on the platform were waving handkerchiefs and hats, and were trying to smile reassuringly. Miss Mandy nervously shook her tear dampened little piece of cotton, her lips drawn in a forced smile and the tears streaming down her cheeks. And just before the corner of the station house came between her and the hotel, she caught a glimpse of the huge red and blue letters of the sign, while in the door beneath stood the new manager waving a friendly good-bye. A fierce wave of resentment swept over Miss Mandy,—resentment that anyone but herself should stand there as proprietor. That hotel was hers! It had been hers from the beginning. No one else had any right to it.

By this time the click of the rails was sounding quicker and quicker, and Wolf Creek was receding into a mere cluster of characterless houses. The track grew narrower and narrower as she looked backward, till the two rails came together in a point at the station. The little group on the platform had merged into a dark blotch relieved only by

the glimmer of the handkerchiefs as they were waved to and fro. The mountains on either side seemed to be sinking lower and lower. Then of a sudden the train had reached the curve. With a lurch the caboose swayed around it, the gap closed and Wolf Creek was lost to view.

With a start Miss Mandy drew a quick, sharp breath. What was she doing? What had she been thinking of? Home? This was home! This life that she had known for twenty-five years, this existence among others of her kind who had lived and suffered as she had, this was where she belonged. And she was leaving it! What place but this could claim her? What people but these cared for her? Her own relations loved her less than these. The home of her girlhood knew her no longer, but she was a part of this. She had helped to make it. It was hers.

Ka-chug! Ka-chug! The rails beat time with her heart, and as she watched the ties glide away from under the caboose and mingle with those behind, a half formed impulse took definite shape in her mind. With each lurch of the train it acquired strength, and with every beat of the pulse a new life seemed infused into her veins. The impulse grew to a resolve. In half an hour they would be at Garrison. Garrison, Garrison, sang the rails, and the song found echo in her heart.

The conductor came in from the other end of the car. "Garrison's only a little way now, Miss Mandy. You'll have to wait a little for the express, she's late."

"I'm goin' back, Bob," said Miss Mandy quietly.

"Goin' back!"

"Yes, I am. I ain't got any business traipsin' off at my time o' life. I'm goin' back to Wolf Creek and settle down like I ought to."

"Well!" exclaimed Bob. Then after a moment, "I'm darned glad of it, Miss Mandy," and he took her little, old hand in his big strong one.

When the east-bound freight drew up at the Garrison platform, a little old lady, one trunk, a basket, and a handbag were transferred to "51" west-bound, as she lay puffing on a side track waiting for the other train to go by. The "So-long!" from Billy and the "See you to-morrow!" of Bob, accompanied by a waving of caps from the occupants of the engine, as "51" pulled out for the West, were the

only approach to the good-byes that had been expected and dreaded an hour earlier. And in the caboose of "51" a little figure in black smiled softly to herself because of a great peace in her heart—a peace that had grown out of a battle bravely fought and won, in which the East had sought to regain a possession that was lost, and the West had claimed its own.

# A REACTION: A Domestic Romance, by J. J. Bell*

"HALF-PAST nine, sir," said Professor Bennett's housekeeper, opening the parlor door and depositing his coat and hat on the chair nearest it, as was her custom on five mornings out of the seven.

"Ah!" exclaimed the Professor, starting, and folding up the letter which he had been reading for the fourth or fifth time; "is it so late, Mrs. Leslie?" he said, with an almost guilty look. His breakfast lay before him cold and untasted, and his morning paper had not been opened.

Mrs. Leslie wondered what was wrong, but merely remarked as she retired, "You will need your coat and muffler to-day, sir. It is bitterly cold."

"Thank you," he returned, as he rose from the table. Sitting down in an easy chair by the fireside, he kicked off his slippers and lifted his boots from the fender. "Twenty years," he muttered; "twenty years since I saw her last, and—I'm still a fool!" He drew on his boots rather savagely and tugged impatiently at the laces. One of them snapped, and, with sundry boyish grimaces, he tied the ends in a clumsy knot. Presently he looked at his watch, then at his pipe-rack, shook his head ruefully, rose to his feet, gulped down a cup of cold tea, donned his coat and hat and hurried from the house. He had to meet his junior chemistry class at ten o'clock.

Mrs. Leslie, after the maid had removed the breakfast things, came into the parlor to do what she called "a little tidying-up." The Professor's slippers were sprawling on the hearth-rug, and she picked them up, placed one within the other, and laid them on a hassock at the side of the mantelpiece within reach of the easy-chair. The morning paper and several circulars and catalogues of second-hand books she transferred from the breakfast table to a shelf also close

*From Chambers's Journal.

to the easy-chair; after which she proceeded to dust the overmantel and the various objects thereon, and to put the furniture straight.

"Well," she said suddenly to herself, "if he hasn't gone off without his muffler!" With a sigh and a head-shake she removed the article of comfort from the chair on which it was lying, and left the room. She retired to her own apartment and sat down at a table covered with manuscripts in a villainous handwriting. Having selected a number of them, she laid a quire or two of ruled paper in front of her and took up a pen. During the last two years she had done a good deal of copying work for her employer, who had some old-fashioned objections to typewriters, and who, somehow, was glad of an excuse for paying his housekeeper a higher wage than she had originally bargained for.

Mrs. Leslie was the widow of a doctor who had not lived long enough to make more than a bare living, and she had been left alone and practically penniless before she was thirty. Her relations were kindly disposed but poor; and as soon as possible she decided to take a situation. She was recommended to Professor Bennett, who at that time had an invalid sister living with him. The invalid took a fancy to the young widow and begged her brother to engage her, which the Professor did, in spite of the chaff of some of his bachelor friends. Two years later Miss Bennett underwent an operation, and recovered health and strength; but instead of insisting on superintending her brother's domestic affairs, she fell in love with an old and faithful admirer, and left the former to what she secretly considered an exceedingly happy fate. In a word, she felt that her brother could not do better than wed his housekeeper. It was well, however, that she never even hinted at such a thing to the Professor. At forty-three he still cherished, somewhat dutifully perhaps, the memory of a woman who had cruelly fooled him when he was twenty years younger; and though after his sister's departure he began to realize that Mrs. Leslie was both a clever and a pretty woman, the idea of trying to forget the past never occurred to him, and his life was almost entirely devoted to his scientific work. He received few visitors, and the disagreeable observations of "kind friends" regarding his retaining such a "young person" in the position of housekeeper did not reach his ears. But with Mrs. Leslie it was different.

As she sat at the writing-table with the Professor's manuscripts before her and the first dip of ink drying on her pen, she told herself that she wished she had resigned her situation immediately after Miss Bennett's marriage. "What a fool I am!" she thought. "I've shilly-shallied for nearly a year; but I've made up my mind to tell him now. I don't suppose I'll ever get another house so nice and easy as this; but, heigh-ho! that has nothing to do with it. I wonder if he'll be annoyed at my leaving. I know he hates changes. And what on earth was the matter with him this morning? He never touched his breakfast, poor man! I must get him something more tempting than a steak for dinner." And Mrs. Leslie fell to considering a dainty dish to set before a scientist.

Meantime Professor Bennett was addressing his class of first-year medicals, light-hearted but heavy-soled young men, ever on the alert for an incident over which they might create a disturbance. As a rule the Professor had his audience well in hand, and provided them with little cause for riotous behavior; but this morning he was obviously nervous, and he signalized his entrance into the lecture-room by dropping his roll-book. This very slight accident was hailed by the budding medicals with mingled murmurs of sympathy and expostulation. "Dear, dear!" "Tut, tut!" and other ejaculations came from the benches—principally the back ones; while several students raised their voices in mock protest and called for "Order!" The Professor kept his temper, though he found it harder to do so than usual, and went on to call the roll, after which he opened the business of the hour. Mercury was the subject of the lecture, and for about thirty minutes the class graciously pleased itself to be interested in the remarks and experiments which were delivered and shown without hesitation or hitch. Then the Professor, who was less interested in his work than usual, tripped in a very simple fashion.

"Another vividly colored salt of mercury is the iodide—mercuric iodide. We may prepare it thus. Here we have a solution of mercuric chloride." The Professor felt for and lifted a bottle, and poured a little of its colorless contents into a beaker of water, which he set on the bench in front of him. "We now add a few drops of an iodide—let us take potassium iodide"—he held up another bottle of colorless

liquid, and tilted it over the beaker. "The mercuric iodide," he continued, looking at his audience, "is formed as a yellow precipitate which changes presently to a brilliant scarlet."

At this point several members of the class began to snigger and shuffle their feet.

"A yellow precipitate which quickly changes to a brilliant scarlet. You can see—"

The giggling and shuffling increased.

"Gentlemen!" said the Professor mildly.

The class was now in vocal and pedal convulsions.

"Gentlemen!" exclaimed the Professor sharply. He glanced at the beaker. The liquid was clear as crystal. The class roared at the discomfiture.

"Gentlemen, I made a mistake; hence the reaction has not taken place. I took too much for granted," he said, trying to smile, but feeling that his face was pale. "One moment, please." He was nervous and annoyed at his blunder.

But the class had lost its head and found its voice and feet. It was seldom such an opportunity occurred in the chemistry lecture room.

"Gentlemen!" exclaimed the Professor, losing his temper.

The noise was redoubled.

"*Gentlemen!*"

Singing was added to the horrors of the disturbance.

"I withdraw the expression," shouted the Professor. "INFANTS!" And he walked swiftly from his desk and out of the lecture-room. He told his assistants in the laboratory that he was feeling unwell, and set out for home.

Mrs. Leslie was surprised at his early return, and when she heard him shut his study door with a vicious crash she felt sure that something serious was the matter. She left her writing and went into the kitchen. Ten minutes later she knocked at the study door.

"Come in," said Professor Bennett. He was sitting at his desk, and as his house keeper entered he accidentally swept a sheet of paper to the floor. Where the sheet of paper had been Mrs. Leslie saw the faded photograph of a girl and a soiled glove.

"I've put some soup in the parlor, sir," she said, looking out of the window.

"I—I don't think I want anything, Mrs. Leslie," he stammered.

"You had so little breakfast, sir."

"Well, well, I'll go into the parlor in a minute. It was very thoughtful of you, Mrs. Leslie," he added, feeling a trifle comforted.

His housekeeper withdrew. "I meant to tell him about my leaving, but—" she began, and stopped with a sigh. "I wonder if she's dead?" she thought presently. "It was an old-fashioned photograph. Poor fellow!"

The Professor placed the glove and likeness in his breast pocket, locked up his desk, and removed himself to the parlor. There he partook of the soup and a glass of sherry, which cheered him physically if not mentally. He filled and lit his pipe and rang the bell. The maid answered it, and he requested her to ask Mrs. Leslie to come to him. She appeared shortly, her hands full of papers.

"I haven't quite finished them," she began.

"There's no hurry, Mrs. Leslie, no hurry. I merely wished to thank you for the excellent soup. You evidently know what I require better than I do myself."

The lady colored slightly. "You don't take much care of yourself, sir," she murmured.

"H'm! Er—I was worried this morning, Mrs. Leslie, and I am sorry to say I had a scene with my class." He knew not what possessed him to tell her that, but immediately he had done so he felt the confession had soothed the soreness of his spirit. "I—I believe I lost my temper abominably," he continued. "The boys were certainly aggravating, but—" He paused and smiled in a shamed manner.

"I was sure you were not feeling quite yourself this morning, sir," said Mrs. Leslie surprised, but not displeased at receiving his confidence. "When would you like lunch, sir?"

"Oh, I don't want any lunch now. But you might make dinner an hour earlier. I—I shall be out most of the afternoon," he said, his clean-shaven face reddening.

"Very good, sir. And I shall have the copying finished by the evening. Is there anything else, sir?"

"No—yes! You might telephone to Mr. Brand at the laboratory, and tell him I shall take the classes as usual to-morrow."

"Very good, sir," said Mrs. Leslie, moving to the door.

"I wish you——" began the Professor. "No; it's nothing,

Mrs. Leslie," he added quickly. "I wish she wouldn't call me 'sir,'" he said to himself a moment later. "It's so unfriendly. Perhaps I'm getting a little unconventional in my old age! But I don't know what I'd do without Mrs. Leslie." He relit his pipe and sighed.

Presently he put his hand in his breast pocket and drew out the photograph, which had lain in his desk for twenty years, and also the letter which he had received that morning. On the back of the card was written "Lily Warden;" the letter was signed "Lily Beckenham."

"I wonder what she wants me to help her in," he muttered. "I suppose she has changed a bit in twenty years. Her husband is dead, and she has a grown-up daughter. Well, well! Strange! I'm almost afraid to meet her again. I believe I was beginning to forget, and now—— Bah! I'm a fool!"

At half-past three that afternoon Professor Bennett, in a condition of extreme nervousness, entered one of the private sitting rooms on the second floor of the Queen's Hotel."

"Ah, Jim, is it really you?" said a faintly familiar voice.

A mist came before the man's eyes. He had not been called "Jim" for twenty years, his sister preferring the more professorial James, as she termed it.

"How—how do you do——" He was going to say "Lily," but the mist cleared from his sight, and he said stumblingly, "Mrs. Beckenham?"

The lady giggled a little foolishly, and invited her visitor to be seated. The man's nervousness left him, and was succeeded by a great pity for the woman before him. Was this Lily—the Lily whose fair memory had haunted and tormented him through the best years of his life? Was this his beloved—this fat, giggling, overdressed, over-jeweled creature? Oh, it was cruel!

She began to talk, and a commonplace conversation ensued. He listened to her account of herself listlessly, and answered her inquiries patiently, till at last he could bear it no longer.

"You wanted my advice on some matter, Mrs. Beckenham?" he said gently.

"Oh yes, Jim; but that can wait," she returned, with ponderous lightness.

In desperation he looked at his watch.

"It was about my daughter, Nora," she said, noticing the

action and thinking to detain him. "She wishes to study medicine. I don't like the idea; but I thought I would consult you before making any decision."

"Er—a *University Calendar* might help you better than I can; it gives pretty full details. I'll see that you get a copy, Mrs. Beckenham."

"Oh! thank you so much, Jim," she said gushingly. "But I hate reading about anything. Bring the *Calendar* with you, and explain it? When will you come and dine with us? We shall be here all this week and probably next week also."

The Professor mumbled some wretched excuses about work that prevented him from deciding definitely at the moment, and it was finally arranged that he should write to her the following day and choose the evening which was convenient for himself.

"Poor Jim," sighed Mrs. Beckenham when she was alone, "he is just as shy as ever."

"What a fool I've been," groaned the professor as he left the hotel. But a moment later he laughed. "By Jupiter! I'm glad she asked me to go and see her this afternoon. Poor thing!" he added softly.

He took a hansom home, and entered the house in high spirits. The first thing he did on reaching his study was to drop into the fire a letter, a photograph and a soiled glove. "Why didn't I do this twenty years ago?" he asked himself. He felt as if his heart had been swept and garnished.

"Something has happened," thought Mrs. Leslie when she met him crossing the hall to dinner; and she retired to her room smiling sadly.

The Professor appreciated the dainty meal, but wished—an uncommon desire for him—he had some one to talk to.

Later in the evening Mrs. Leslie came to him in the study with his manuscript and her copy. She took her seat under the lamp at the writing table and read over her day's work so that he might check any errors.

He lay back in his easy-chair enjoying a cigar, rather a rare form of tobacco for him to indulge in. "What a pleasant voice she has, to be sure!" he reflected lazily; and presently he began to watch her as she read, failing to notice several nonsensical blunders, due no doubt, in the first place, to his own bad writing.

"Have I made no mistakes this time?" asked Mrs. Leslie in some surprise when she had completed her task.

"Eh?" said the Professor, as if roused from a dream. "Oh, I beg your pardon, Mrs. Leslie. No; I think it is all quite correct; and I'm very much obliged to you."

She laid down the papers and rose. He wished she would not go.

"Sir," said Mrs. Leslie, and the word jarred the man disagreeably, "I—I would like to speak to you about—about——"

"Yes, Mrs. Leslie?" he said, wondering at her hesitation.

"I—I am afraid I must leave you sir." It was hardly the speech she had prepared.

"Ah, you have something to do this evening. I'm sorry I've kept you reading so long. Don't let me detain you, Mrs. Leslie."

"But I mean—I mean leave you altogether," she stammered; "leave your house, sir."

The cigar dropped from the Professor's fingers. "Leave me—leave my house, Mrs. Leslie?" he gasped.

Mrs. Leslie could not speak at the moment; but she picked up the cigar, which she saw was burning the carpet, and laid it on an ash tray at his elbow. "I am thinking of going to live in the country," she said, moving back to her position by the writing table.

"The country? Where?" inquired the Professor. "I beg your pardon," he added quickly. "It's none of my business." A dismal idea possessed him; Mrs. Leslie was going to be married.

"I don't think the town suits me, sir," said his housekeeper.

It struck him that he had never seen her looking so well. There was a fine color in her cheeks. But he only said, "I'm very sorry, Mrs. Leslie."

"I—I could wait till you get another housekeeper," she remarked, ending an uncomfortable pause.

He looked up at her with a curiously wistful expression.

"Thank you," he said slowly. "My sister is coming tomorrow to remain for a week. Perhaps you will talk over the matter with her, Mrs. Leslie."

"Very good, sir."

The Professor leapt to his feet. "For any sake don't call me 'sir,'" he cried, pale and trembling.

She started and stared at him in amazement, speechless. A dead silence came between them.

The man broke it. "Forgive me, please. I—I don't know what's wrong with me." Without a word she moved towards the door. He followed, and opening it for her, gravely bowed as she left the room.

It was a long and miserable night for Professor Bennett. At five in the morning, unable to rest longer in his bed, he dressed and went down to the study, where for nearly three hours he paced the floor. About eight Mrs. Leslie, who never allowed the maid to enter the sanctum, opened the door, and was startled to find the room tenanted.

"I quarreled with my sleep last night," said the Professor, with a poor smile. How fresh and pretty she looked!

"It is too cold here, sir," said Mrs. Leslie, who carried a newspaper and a bundle of sticks. "Mary is cleaning the parlor this morning, and I was going to light the fire and lay your breakfast here." She crossed the room, knelt down on the hearthrug, and began to rake out the ashes.

"I wish you wouldn't do that, Mrs. Leslie," he murmured, after watching her for a few minutes. Perhaps she did not hear him; at any rate she paid no attention, and soon the flames were rising through the wood and coal. She rose to her feet with the ash-pan in her hands. He strode forward, and before she knew what he was about he had taken it from her and laid it on the floor.

"You must not do that," he said passionately.

"Oh, sir!" she cried.

He writhed at the word. "Sit down for a minute, please," he pleaded. "I want to speak to you, Mrs. Leslie."

Something compelled her to obey.

"You—you are leaving me for—or house of your own, are you not?" he asked awkwardly. "I—I should like to be allowed to—to furnish part of it—if—if your future"——

"Oh, stop! It's a mistake."

"A mistake? You mean you are going to be housekeeper to some one else?"

"Yes. I suppose so."

"I thought you were going to be married, Mrs. Leslie."

"No, sir."

The Professor walked the length of the room and returned to the fire. "I must tell you," he said desperately. And thereupon he poured forth with a stammering tongue, the tale of his twenty-year-old love affair. "You would never have guessed such a thing of me?" he said sadly, in conclusion.

"I knew it," returned Mrs. Leslie gently. She had forgotten he was her employer. "At least I had an idea that you cared very much for somebody."

"That I imagined I cared for somebody," he muttered reddening. He dropped into a chair beside her, and she made as if to rise. "Mrs. Leslie," he said, "don't go just yet. I've something else to tell you."

"I must see about your breakfast, sir."

"Deuce take the breakfast!"

"Oh!" But she could not repress a little smile.

The little smile was like a tonic to the Professor. He looked bravely at her. "Let me tell you the plain truth, he whispered. "I don't want you to leave me, Mrs. Leslie, because—ah, because I can't do without you."

There was no mistaking his meaning. She felt his eyes upon her, but she could not meet them.

"My dear," he went on, laying a hand on hers, "could you think of—of caring for a stupid fellow like me?"

Her head dropped lower in silence.

"I—I think I must have loved you these last three years," he continued bashfully, "although I didn't realize it till last night. Can you believe that? I was thinking last night of what it would be to come into this house and not find you in it, and—and, my dear, I felt I—ah, no—I can't do without you."

He waited in vain for her to speak.

"Is there no hope for me?" he sighed.

The longing in his voice told her more than his words could do. "Are you quite, quite sure?" she whispered.

"Oh, you must believe me! Could I have told you my—my foolish story if I hadn't loved you—loved you enough to be entirely honest with you?"

"It's so strange," she murmured.

"Even if you don't care for me, I would wish to marry you," he cried.

"But—but I do!" she replied, giving in at last.

A knock at the door disturbed them.

"Goodness me!" said Mrs. Leslie in confusion. "It's Mary with the breakfast things. I'll take them from her. Let me go, sir—I mean, James."

"No, my dear; just let Mary come in. I may as well tell her," said the Professor recklessly.—"Come in, Mary!" he called, to Mrs. Leslie's dismay.

The maid entered with a tray of dishes. "Please, Mrs. Leslie—" she began.

"Oh, just lay the table yourself, Mary," said the Professor gaily. "Lay it for two."

"Oh, James!" whispered his lady-love in protest.

"Lay it for two. Mrs. Leslie is—er—going to marry me, Mary."

"Lor'!" ejaculated Mary, and dropped the tray of dishes with a dismal crash.

"Never mind, Mary," said the Professor calmly. "You're a good girl. Get some more dishes, and I'll gather up the mess."

Mrs. Leslie sat down and laughed till she cried—cried with real tears, for it had been an exciting morning. This brought the Professor to his senses, and when breakfast was ready a comparatively staid but happy couple took their places at the table.

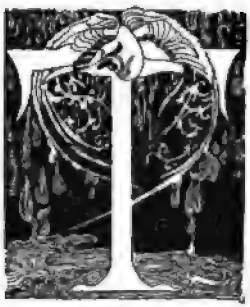
The Professor arrived at the lecture-room two minutes late, and found a concert of discords proceeding.

"Gentlemen," he said, holding up his hand and smiling pleasantly—"gentlemen, may I ask for another kind of harmony? I sincerely desire it, gentlemen."

A round of cheers and then silence. The Professor placed a beaker of water in front of him. He picked up a bottle from his bench and scrutinized the label. "Mercuric chloride," he said as he poured a few drops into the water. "To obtain mercuric iodide," he went on; "I add potassium iodide and he picked up another bottle and examined the label. "Now"—he tilted the bottle—"we see the mercuric iodide come down as a yellow precipitate which quickly changes to a brilliant scarlet."

There was an expectant hush, and then the class began to applaud vigorously.

"Gentlemen, said the Professor, "the reaction has taken place, and a foolish mistake has been rectified." He smiled softly as he turned over a page of his lecture-book.



# THE Lost Letter: A Story of What Might Have Been, by Enrico Castlenuovo. Translated from the Italian by Florence McIntyre Tyson*

PROFESSOR Attilio Cernieri, distinguished Egyptologist, Senator of the Kingdom, commander of numerous orders, active member of the Lincei, Corresponding Fellow of an infinite number of Italian and foreign Societies and Academies, was having his servant, Pomponio, open two cases of books arrived the evening before from Padua.

The books were the residue of a library, that he had gathered at Padua when, twenty years before, he had filled the chair of neo-Latin in that University. Afterwards he had traveled much for scientific purposes, had been called successively to the Institute of higher learning in Florence to the University of Naples and finally the Ministry had solicited his presence in Rome, at the Sapienza, creating a chair especially for him and offering him high emoluments.

For some time, during the professor's peregrinations, the library, packed up and left with a colleague, had remained undisturbed at Padua. Then Cernieri had sent for a part of it when he was in Florence; another part later on, when in Naples. Now having to come to Rome, with the intention of fixing there his permanent residence, he had determined to send for the two last cases.

To be sure these books were not absolutely necessary to a man, who besides having recently refurnished his own library, had at his disposition, the public and private libraries of the capital.

We live in a century in which everything proceeds by

* Translated for Short Stories.

steam, even science. What is true to-day can readily be false to-morrow; and a volume runs the risk of being useless over night.

But in spite of its ten years of life, the monograph, in which our hero had demonstrated with ponderous arguments, relegated to the Finnish Family, a group of roots hitherto believed to be of Celtic origin, had not grown old. The book small in weight, but heavy in thought, had been translated into all the languages of Europe, and the genial information had placed our professor "at the top of the scientific pyramid" to quote the words of an enthusiastic disciple by the side of the principal living philologist, the famous Lowenstein of the University of Upsala. But whether because the top of a pyramid is an uncomfortable place for two or not, Cernieri and Lowenstein had at first offered the interesting spectacle of two contestants who are vigorously striving to throw one another off, until, finally convinced of the uselessness of their struggles, they had changed rivalry into friendship.

The two learned men were, of course, two strugglers in the scientific arena, but instead of struggling with each other, they struggled with the world at large. If by chance, any mortal could be found rash enough to raise his crest and dare to endeavor to seat himself too, on the top of the famous pyramid. Had it been possible to penetrate the depths of the minds of the two "chers confrerès" as they styled themselves in correspondence, it would probably have been discovered, that each placed a very moderate estimate upon the virtues of the other. Lowenstein had very little faith in the Finnish roots; and Cernieri believed still less in the revolution, brought about by Lowenstein in the study of the Hindoo-Persian.

But let us leave Lowenstein in peace in distant Norway and turn our attention entirely to our illustrious compatriot. And to begin with, upon the afternoon in which Pomponio is opening the case of books, the Professor was but forty, though looking much older.

He was slightly stoop-shouldered and his ample forehead was seamed with premature wrinkles; his near-sighted eyes were hidden behind glasses, and were generally half-closed, like those of a sleepy pussie-cat. His hair was thin and grey, his beard straggling, ill-cared for and nearly white. When

he was young, Cernieri used to shave; but after it had happened several times that he in his absent-mindedness had shaved but half his face, and in that unusual condition had entered his classes, he had thought best to leave well enough alone. For the rest, the abstraction of professors is proverbial and need not be dwelt on here, though upon one occasion he had lost his train, by persisting in looking through the whole station at Bologna for a package he had in his hand.

Absent-minded people are generally very good-natured, but our professor was an exception to the rule. Ordinarily his lips were visited but by the scientific smile, made up of the superiority and commiseration, with which a learned man hears of the absurdities committed by a brother-colleague or the world at large. In society, upon the rare occasions he forced himself to enter it, he preferred standing aside, avoiding women with horror, for he had not the faintest idea what to say to them, and the dear creatures themselves were equally at a loss what to say to him, though five or six years ago, owing to the scarcity of husbands in this vale of tears, more than one mother had cast her eyes over him, as a convenient parti for one of her daughters.

So at one time the Countess Pastori had been brave enough to invite him to dinner, hoping to make him marry her second daughter, who had bad teeth and weak eyes and had not found any one who would have her. The young girl, properly coached, had received the professor with marked deference, had prepared with her own hand an exquisite peach marmalade, and had even gone to the length of evincing interest in Finnish roots. Cernieri, however, did not take the bait; but at once on guard shortened his visit and was careful never to set foot inside the doors of the Pastori mansion, until the little Countess was betrothed to an importer of salt-fish, who joined the cultivation of salmon with veneration for the titled nobility.

So warned by experience, he became gruffer than before, and more than ever inaccessible to any ideas of gallantry.

Every man has in the book of his life, a secret page, that a woman has made joyous or gloomy; as far as Professor Cernieri was concerned, this page had remained a blank. At least so his friends said; so would he have answered himself, had he been asked, and he would have spoken in good faith. Absorbed as he was in research, he forgot things

near at hand. Oh, why must he be made to remember the distant past?

"Mercy on us!" exclaimed Pomponio, who had begun to take the books out of the box. "Mercy on us, what a dust!" Then added, "Really it would be much better, if you would let me take them all down-stairs and dust them there."

But the Professor vigorously opposed the proposition. He wished it all to take place in his study, under his own eyes. He wanted, after they were dusted, himself to put the books in a case ready for their reception. And Pomponio, resigned to the inevitable, continued taking them out, dusting them as best he could, and handing them to his master; who, having glanced at the title, put them in place.

The air was surcharged with dust, which covered the furniture, penetrated the pores, making both master and servant cough and sneeze constantly. "There is a spider's web on this," said Pomponio, as he lifted a large folio. It proved to be an antique atlas of the world, printed at Gotha by Justus Perthès; and it so happened, that while the man was dusting it, a little square envelope, yellowed with age, dropped from its leaves and fell upon the floor.

"Gracious, what is that?" said Pomponio. "It looks like a letter." And putting down the atlas, he stooped to pick it up.

But the professor had anticipated him and half-dazed was turning the letter round and round. Without doubt it *was* a letter and one of his own at that, still sealed, the stamp uncanceled, addressed in his own writing; the heavy weighty writing of a man born to be a cavaliere of many orders; a fellow of many societies. It was a too distinct hand, giving assurance that the letter should reach its destination, if it had been mailed!

"Alla gentile Signorina Maria Lisa Altavilla, Firenze, Via dei Servi, No. 25–1 Floor.

That name appearing so unexpectedly under his eyes carried Professor Cernieri back twenty years, forcing from the mists of oblivion, a slender, graceful girl, whose lovely countenance was crowned with an expression of rare sweetness. For her alone had his heart ever quickened. For her sake alone had he once for one day, for an hour, thought seriously of taking a wife. And then?—

Pomponio, who was consumed with curiosity, had noiselessly approached the professor and murmured, "But how in the world did it get hidden in that book?"

Cernieri turned brusquely—"What business have you here? Leave the room."

"Shall I not go on?"

"No, not now. Go away."

"Has anything happened?"

"Nothing. If I need you, I will ring."

Pomponio reluctantly retired. He would have given anything to know what sort of a letter that was, which had so disturbed his employer.

When he was gone the professor sat down in his great arm chair and with trembling fingers broke the seal that Maria Lisa Altavilla had never been allowed to do. And this was what he had written in Padua, October 15th, 1875:

CARA SIGNORINA.—I have just received the sad announcement and hasten to assure you of my sincere sympathy in your great grief. Last July, when I had the honor in Venice of being often with your father and yourself, I was a witness of your solicitude for that precious, highly-esteemed soul.

Do you remember (I can never forget it) that morning's trip to the sea? We had first visited San Lazzaro, where he had been good enough to listen with interest to my explanation in regard to the mummy, preserved in the Museum of the Mechitaristi Fathers, then having crossed to Sant' Elizabeth on the Lido, we repaired to the baths lately established there. Your father, feeling rather tired, remained in the hotel with a friend, while we went to walk on the beach.

The day was deliciously balmy, the sun's rays tempered behind little clouds, so that you closed your red silk umbrella. The wavelets lapped the shore softly at our feet, where our foot-prints marked the sand. You confided to me that for several years your father's health seemed to grow worse; how the various doctors, who had been called in, had suggested this remedy and that, without being at all able to arrest the course of the disease, which was overwhelming you with terror. You told me of the tender affection that led him to hide his suffering from you; he, who had never before concealed anything. Growing more confidential you told me of your happy home life, of the full

accord of your mutual thoughts and feelings, of your deep love each for the other, cemented by sorrow; for, from a large family, there now remained but you two in the world. Then overcome by emotion you ceased speaking, your eyes full of tears.

What words struggled for utterance on my part! I cannot express all that was in my heart. I am naturally timid, and I will acknowledge a great horror of anything that will distract me from my studies or interfere with my habits; but I feel sure I made you understand, Signorina, how deeply I sympathized with you. I know I told you I was at your service whenever you might choose to call upon me. "Thanks," you murmured gently, while your hand trembled in mine. Then you insisted upon going back to your father.

We spoke no word as we went, but it seemed to me that our souls understood one another. In a day or two you had quitted Venice without my having the opportunity of seeing you again alone.

Now, Signorina, the greatest of sorrows has come to you. Now is the time for you to test the true value of your friends.

I would wish to come myself to Florence, but I am forced to leave in a few hours for London in order to be present at the Congress of Orientalists, which opens there on the 19th inst.

From England I may possibly start on a long journey out of Europe. My movements will depend upon you; one word from you will take me back to Italy. In any event, I shall be in London all October, and I beg you will let me have a line from you, Poste Restante. Think that I, too, and for a much longer period than you, have been alone in the world. Believe me always,

Yours Sincerely,

ATILIO CERNIERI.

Twice the professor read the four pages through, forcing himself to recall the day, the hour, the place in which he had written it; seeking to explain to himself how he could have forgotten to post it, as well as that the absolute silence of Maria Lisa Altavilla had not aroused some suspicion in his mind; why he had never written again to make sure. And this is what he remembered.

The mortuary notice had arrived one morning as he was

in the midst of packing and his thoughts had turned persistently to the young girl he had known three months before in Venice and who had shown such perfect confidence in him. All day he had debated within himself whether he should merely send her his condolences or if he ought to say something more in regard to the sentiments with which she had inspired him, in which perhaps she shared. She was not an ordinary girl, this Maria Lisa. She seemed created to be the companion of a scholar.

Had she not been her father's secretary and could she not be his? To learn two or three languages so that she might help him; to take notes for him to keep his work in order; to correct printer's proofs, and when he was leaving for a congress or scientific mission, to pack his trunks and accompany him to the station; perhaps sometimes go along to look after the nuisance of tickets, to treat with hotel proprietors, cabmen, etcetera. Viewed in this light, matrimony did not seem such a terrible abyss; but a tranquil port, in which to take shelter from storms. And that evening, at the same time with other letters, he had written that one to Maria Lisa; had written with an expansion and an abandon that had filled him with wonder; even now he was amazed, as he felt once again the unaccustomed sweetness of the thing.

Once again he was in his little room in his apartment at Padua; on the table an oil lamp was burning; spread out before him lay the atlas of Menke at the page that told of "Egyptus ante Cambysii tempus." He had been consulting it before answering his friend Morrison of the University of Edinburgh, who was insisting that they should together visit the ruins of Thebes in Upper Egypt, and he leaving his decision until after the Congress had, on the chance of the journey, corrected and amplified the itinerary to take in Ithaca, Apollonapolis, Syene, and then Cernieri remembered his landlady had knocked at his door to tell him the carriage was there and that she had already put his luggage, his plaid and his umbrella in. He had shut the atlas and put it back upon the shelf hurriedly; hurriedly he had pushed the letters already stamped into his pocket; hurriedly had rushed down and thrown himself into the cab.

By what strange fate had one of the letters been shut in the atlas? By what carelessness, in putting the rest in the

mail-box, had he not noticed that one was missing, the most important of all, was an enigma the learned professor was unable to solve? He was ready to swear, that never for an instant had the thought occurred to him, that he had not posted the letter; indeed, he remembered, how for a number of days he was dumbfounded at his own rashness.

Why had he not considered the matter more fully? Why, with one of those words which cannot be taken back, had he run the risk of sacrificing that greatest of blessings—independence? Why had he played all his future on one card? He was a man of honor; had he received a favorable reply from Maria Lisa, nothing would have induced him to draw back. If she said no, then he had invited a needless repulse.

Dio buono, what madness had taken possession of him? It was more than likely that a girl, who was not beautiful and hadn't a penny of dot, would remain single for two or three years at least and then he could have sought opportunities of seeing her and knowing her better, and of weighing the pros and cons.

So during the first week in London, while the temptation was increasing for the journey to the Orient with Morrison and a young "docente" from Heidelberg, who had offered himself as a companion, he was upset and nervous, and trembled at every distribution of letters, not knowing what he wished or feared. Then as time passed and he read his two theses, and became absorbed in the work of the Congress and drawn within the circle of illustrious scholars, who were greeting him as a new luminary in the world of science, the image of the poor absent orphan faded gradually away and a secret hope sprang up in his heart that he had regained his liberty through the continued silence of Maria Lisa without the humiliation of a refusal.

He could always remember he had done his duty; it was not his fault if his offer had not been accepted.

So one day, early in November, he could exclaim with Julius Cæsar

"Alea jacta est."

A rapid flight through Europe brought him with his companions to Brindisi, whence they embarked for Alexandria. Two years were passed in Upper Egypt and Abyssinia in

the study of hieroglyphics and ruins, and in sending learned treatises to the principal European Reviews. Magazines, journals, letters from men of science, elections to academies poured in from Italy, from France, from Germany; some silly letters even came from his landlady in Padua. From Florence, from Maria Lisa Altavilla not a word. Then when he got home, he almost forgot all about her. Only two years had passed, but they were worth a century to him, and preceding events assumed to his eyes a vague, nebulous distance. So when he had heard that three months before Maria Lisa had married a "Pretore residente" in an out-of-the-way corner of Sicily, he had not troubled himself more than he could help about it. He had to choose from the various offers of the Ministry, he had to write an article for the Edinburgh Review on Assyrian Antiquities; finally, he had to finish a weighty thesis, on those Finnish and Celtic roots, for whose sake he had resolved to devote himself entirely to philology at the expense of everything else.

Maria Lisa was so small in comparison and matrimony might have been such a nuisance. Only some time afterwards, as he was on the point of accepting a Chair in Florence, he was assailed with scruples.

Suppose through the changing of her husband's jurisdiction, the lady were now in Tuscany? How ought he to act? To seem indifferent and pretend not to recognize her, or to reproach her with the rudeness with which she had treated him?

Alas! the professor was soon relieved of all doubts.

La Maria Lisa Altavilla? the daughter of the Chevalier Altavilla? Who had married the pretore Carlucci? Poor thing! she had died in Sicily of malarial fever before she had been married more than ten months.

Dead! Atillio Cernieri felt penetrated through with pity and regret. Dead, so young; she, who might have been his wife! Then he would now be alone with his life all wrecked about him! Ah! it was indeed a thousand times better that Maria Lisa had not answered him! Better not to have gotten into habits that would now have to be broken! Better not to have grown accustomed to having a woman by his side. Those who know declare it is difficult to do without them then.

In a word, Cernieri had not been slow to comfort himself. And then, too, Time had fulfilled her part, spreading a thick veil over the fleeting episode; covering even the name of Maria Lisa with oblivion.

Now the old letter found within the pages of the ancient atlas had brought it all back. Before the middle-aged man, grown old in study, hardened with egotism, rose an enchanting picture of youth, clothed in shining colors, full of intangible sweetness. Pressing the poor, little yellow sheet between his hands, he beheld once more Maria Lisa's sweet face. As she sadly gazed at him she seemed to say: "Why in my hour of need did you not send me a word of sympathy? Chance acquaintances pitied my grief; thou, who hadst let me believe didst love me, alone remained mute and insensible. I called upon thee too. Ah! wretched indeed is she who trusts in a man!"

Cernieri seemed to hear Maria Lisa's voice pronounce the words.

And she had died without hearing his vindication, without knowing the truth. It is indeed, "Sorrows crown of sorrow" to be faded with the irrevocable, to be tormented with wrongs that cannot be repaired, with misunderstandings that cannot be removed.

But the letter, which the grave professor continued to hold unfolded before him, told, not only that Maria Lisa was dead, believing him worse than he deserved, but also that in his life there had been a moment of poetry, of abandon and of love and that that moment had remained barren. Never again could life bring him such another. Never again would his heart quicken for a woman's sake. Never again could flow from his pen words which might seem to us cold and conventual, but to him seemed burning with ardor and love. And he asked himself: "Suppose the letter had gone, had arrived at its destination and Maria Lisa had answered, 'I understand what thou wishest; I consent. I love thee and am willing to be thine. Come.'" Then certainly, he should not have undertaken his great journey to Egypt and Assyria. Would not have deciphered hieroglyphics or interpreted the language of the ruins. Perhaps, though, he would have had sons of his own. Perhaps domestic cares might have retarded his fame, his activity might have been clogged and honors and decorations might not have

fallen so abundantly upon his head. He might not even have made his luminous discovery about the Finnish roots. Perchance another would now occupy his enviable position on the very top of the scientific pyramid by the side of Lowenstein of the University of Upsala. If all that might have happened, a man like Professor Attilio Cernieri ought to rejoice that it had not. And still—and still!—A persistent, hungry doubt would not allow him to quiet his soul with this philosophic consolation. Would it not have been better to have sacrificed a little glory to have had a little love?

The Professor Attilio Cernieri lacked courage to tear or destroy the letter. He placed it in his desk, recalled Pomponio, and desired him to resume his interrupted labor.

But that evening in his study, the temptation to again behold those words of twenty years ago overcame him anew. And afterwards there did not pass a day in which he did not take the poor little worn sheet from its envelope and read it over and over.

Then he would look at the envelope, at the stamp, upon which the Post had impressed no mark and murmur once more

"If the letter had only gone!"

# ASTER of the Situation: A Smuggling Tale, by G. B. O'Halloran*

AS the revenue cutter *Argus* dropped anchor in the roads outside Watermouth for the fifth time in January in the notable year 1740, the populace of that tiny community sent up, in accordance with custom, a subdued shriek of laughter. But the merry faces took on an expression of orderliness and respect when the warship's gig drew in to the shore and landed Lieutenant the Honourable Peter Crackthorpe upon the quay. The Honourable Peter's official rank was no indication of his age, which hovered on dubious wing somewhere in the altitudes of the fifties; nor, on the other hand, was his age a sign of naval ability. Severe of aspect, haughty in demeanor, with carriage erect to the angle of defiance, he stood confessed a martinet of martinets. The men of the *Argus* regarded their commander with a lively awe, and related each to the other most convincing stories of Lieutenant Crackthorpe's unsparing devotion to useless minutiæ. He possessed, indeed, a very lust of punctilio, and his transference to so lowly a position as captain of the *Argus*, which was consecrated to the task of chasing smugglers and spreading terror of the law amongst the jolly freetraders of the East Anglian coast, was the direct outcome of an incident whose details came to the ears of the Lords of the Admiralty in an unembellished edition. Somewhat previously to the date of his removal to the *Argus*, family influence had been so far exerted in the nation's benefit as to procure the gazetting of the gallant Mr. Crackthorpe to the command of a sloop of war. It is true he had not long ob-

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tained his lieutenancy, but friends at court had shown the necessity of introducing fresh blood, especially of the Crackthorpe hue, for every one knows that the Honourable Peter was only brother to the most noble the Marquis of Gonscilly. The sloop of war was quickly in commission, and, as luck would have it—the Crackthorpes had thrived for generations on luck—within twenty-four hours the crew of a miserable French fishing boat caught poaching in English waters hauled down their flag at early dawn, in submission to the English warship, after the latter had driven her stem into the little smack, which then quickly prepared to founder. Now Commander Crackthorpe, who at the commencement of the chase was sleeping the sleep of rewarded merit, had been awakened in order that he might take his proper position on this momentous occasion; but a determination to complete his toilet before appearing on deck bade fair to deprive the second in command altogether of his senior officer's presence and aid. As soon as the collision took place several rope ladders were flung out over the side to the Frenchmen, who began climbing up with much eagerness, as their own boat lay foundering alongside. But the Honourable Peter had not only determined to finish his toilet, he had also determined to be in at the death, and was unwilling to forego a single ray of the glory which awaited him on the quarter-deck. At this juncture, therefore, he sent strict orders not to allow the prisoners to place foot on the deck until he himself was there to receive them, with the result that half a dozen poor wretches were clinging desperately to the rope ladders, at the top of which stood marines with fixed bayonets to prevent them advancing, and below which the deep sea yawned.

"Must receive my prisoners like a gentleman, sir," he said to the midshipman in attendance. "Dignity of the King's service was to be upheld, and, begad, I'll uphold it." And presently he stumped up on the quarter-deck, in gold braid and glinting scabbard, to accept "like a gentleman, sir, and in a manner to advance the dignity of the King's service, sir," the unconditional surrender of six drenched, dejected, harmless fisher folk from Brittany, who had taken, maybe, a couple of herrings inside the three-mile limit.

It was this and similar instances which procured for the Honourable Peter the pseudonym of "Prince of Punctilio"

amongst the officials of the Admiralty. The Naval Lords cast about them for a safe place in which to hide the Prince, that is to say, a place where punctilio could do little harm even if it did no good. And so it was decided that Lieutenant Crackthorpe should take command of the revenue cutter *Argus*, and spend the rest of his professional days in chasing the lawless smuggler.

In the time of these events there was no village along the whole East Anglian coast line so notorious for its illicit traffic in spirits as Watermouth, and no man in Watermouth better loved than that rebel to the law, Black Zam. His name in full was Samuel Treherne, and he hailed from a small seaport in the west country, which he some ten years ago had been obliged to quit, as the revenue officers of that neighborhood were strongly averse to Zam's methods of earning an honest living by free trade. Treherne brought with him a rich experience of the sea and a thick west-country vernacular in which the letter "s" had never been done justice, so that when this mariner spoke of a "hizzing zarpent" the phrase lost all that piercing force which the sibilants are meant to endow it with. He called himself "Zam," and the Suffolk people christened him Black Zam, out of respect for his umbrageous beard; and this was the man whom Lieutenant Crackthorpe kept a sharp look-out for as he stepped starchily along the Watermouth quay on his way to the "Loyalty Arms." Arrived at the tavern—for the shabby little inn could hardly be called more—the officer entered the taproom with a clinking sword, and was there greeted with the most profound expressions of respect by mine host Huckle Davy. Huckle was always ready to be loquacious, and the officer wore a thin smile which encouraged the tavernkeeper to talk genially.

"Goo' morn', sir," said Huckle, rubbing his bony hands together. "Fine morn', sir, if it don't rain, as my father used to say. My father was a hoomorous man, sir."

The Lieutenant's thin smile gave place to a thick frown, and Huckle's geniality took a chill.

"Your father be damned, master Davy—as most likely he is. I don't require your jokes until I ask for them, sir."

"No, m' lord. Ax pardon, m' lord," said Davy; and "m' lord," open to every attack of adulation, was mollified and relented.

"Now look here, Davy, my good fellow, I want two min-

utes' private talk," and he looked meaningly at a jerseyed figure standing apart, endeavoring to finish a large tankard of ale without attracting too much attention.

The landlord of the "Loyalty Arms" turned on the humble customer. "Out you go, Jimmy Brail, and sharp!—Quit now!—hiding there in the corner to listen to State secrets w'at m' lord was just agoin' to let me into. You're a miserable tike at best, and got no manner o' right to remain in the room when a nobleman comes in on business."

Jimmy Brail, the most harmless of mortals, essayed to expostulate, but before this outburst of authority—for Davy was the autocrat of the place—the poor man dwindled out of the door, looking at the half-finished mug.

"He hasn' got the pluck of a fiel' mouse, m' lord, and I don' b'lieve he'd run a ha'porth o' risk to save his life. He's frightened to go to sea, he is, and no better than a beach loafer."

"Cut this balderdash," said the officer; "and now we're alone, pay attention. Where is he?"

"Who, m' lord? Jimmy Brail?" asked Davy, with innocent blue eyes.

"*Not* Jimmy," said the officer; "Treherne, I mean. You know I have never set eyes on him yet."

"He was past the house, sir, not two minutes afore you come, sir, and maybe even now within a stone's throw of us. Quick, sir, there he is!" And Davy, who was now peering up the street through the window, speedily brought Mr. Crackthrope to his side. "Just agoin' roun' the corner opposite the shore windlass—in a brown smock and top boots. That's him, sir."

The eager gaze of the lieutenant dashed about from one brown smocked figure to another in the long-deferred hope of fixing indelibly on his memory the form and appearance of that arch smuggler Treherne. But brown smocks and top boots seemed to be the universal dress.

"I'm right glad you got a good sight of him, m' lord," said Huckle. "You'd know him anywhere now, sir, I'se warrant."

"Ye-e-s, certainly," replied the Lieutenant uncertainly.

"Once seen nev' to be forgotten, sir, as my hoomorous old father used to say. And I s'pose now your lordship

would wish to know when he intends making the next trip to Flushing?"

"That's precisely my wish, Davy. What's your news?"

"Well, m' lord, after a power of trouble I larnt from them as knows that he's goin' to be quiet the whole of this week, this bein' Monday, and he p'poses gettin' away for a cargo on Sunday next. And it's awful to think that when we are all worshipin' in the temple these godless men will be settin' out on their lawless errand."

Lieutenant Crackthorpe drummed on the pane with his fingers. He was not too much deluded with Davy's religious attitude, nor did he bind himself to accept implicitly the publican's statements. He turned suddenly upon mine host.

"Come, my man," he said, briskly, "I've heard quite differently from another quarter, and I put you on your oath whether your version about Treherne's next trip is true or not. I am determined to make sure of my ground, for I was once before deceived in a similar case." Davy looked incredulous.

"Well, m' lord," he replied, rubbing his hands, "I wouldn' go so far as say on my oath it's true or ontrue. 'Cause the inf'mation's not first han' to me. I larn'd it on'y yes'day from Mrs. Baxter who come in 'mediately after breakfast on her way up to Squire's for the weekly wash, where she's been employed reg'lar since the death of old John Baxter; and she's got four children, the eldest a fine little chap now gettin' two shillin's a week from the butcher at Canebury-by-Marsh——"

"Damnation, sir!" broke in the Lieutenant. "How the devil do Mrs. Baxter and her brats concern me or the King's service? Cut it short, I say, or, great ged, I will cut your drivelling windpipe short." And he looked Neronic.

"Beg pardon, your Grace; but seein' your Grace put me on my oath I'm bound in justice to myself to give the full particulars, else I couldn't swear to it. It's a weight on my conscience. But if the particulars are too long for your lordship to listen to, and your lordship consents to take me off my oath"—his lordship at once took him off—"I would go so far as to say that it's true in so far as havin' no special reference to nothin', but otherwise, bein' second or third hand news, the truth might ha' got warped as it passed from

han' to han', that is to say from mouth to mouth, until there you are, your Grace!" Huckle Davy finished his peroration with a fine manner of simplicity.

"Yes, there I am, Huckle, in just about the same place as I was before." And though his words were testy, Mr. Crackthorpe loved to be addressed as "your Grace" (a fact which Master Davy had learned long ago), and he swiftly succumbed to the assault upon his vanity.

"The chief point to remember, m' lord, is that the skipper always makes a northerly cast as he returns home with his cargo. He thinks there's less risk of capture that way. And now, sir, m' lord, havin' parted with this valliable piece of information, p'raps I might claim a little on account."

The officer's face gloomed over. "I can't do it just now, Davy. Fact is"—in a whisper—"the Government has sent me a hint that I have dispensed the Secret Service money with too free a hand, and have not received value in exchange. D'ye understand? Now, I'll tell you what we'll do. You shall have ten golden sovereigns the moment I am in a position to proclaim Treherne and his gang prisoners of the King. Great ged!" he continued, evading the full oath, "the sun is on the meridian. Good day to you, master Davy. I must get back to my ship." And the great man strode stiffly out of the tavern, and walked back to the quay under the visual guns of the loitering population of Watermouth.

The cool air outside chilled the lieutenant back to his normal condition, and he soon came to the conclusion that Huckle Davy was a flatterer and a liar; that in this instance, as in many a previous one, his information had been diametrically opposed to fact. Very good. Turn the matter about, and what should an intelligent officer do? Why, take it for granted that the *Gentle Pilgrim*—Black Zam's fast trading sloop—would sail this very night for Holland, and instead of making a northerly cast on her return trip she would certainly make a southerly one. So Lieutenant Crackthorpe put out to sea on this theory, and for three days without success thrashed across the North Sea hither and thither through mist and shine in search of the famous smuggler.

The naval officer's theory was correct, for that very night Black Zam laid the head of the *Gentle Pilgrim* on her path to Flushing, picking the way with consummate skill

in the darkness. Twenty-four hours later Flushing was reached in a favoring breeze, and a score of barrels labelled "coal tar" were taken on board and stowed away. The whole cargo was snugly arranged in a very short time with that ease and expedition which can only be acquired by long practice. When the twilight of evening arrived, the *Gentle Pilgrim* stole away from Flushing harbor, and, once outside, put on a press of canvas and sped on her dangerous course for England. She carried no lights, but ran the gauntlet of all perils.

In the early morning a strong breeze had sprung up which increased by noon to a moderate hurricane, and the *Gentle Pilgrim* plunged her bows into the billows or rose like a bird on their crests. Though the day was dull, it was possible to see great distances, and it may have been about two o'clock in the afternoon that a small group on the fo'c's'le became aware of a wreck whose masts were standing well up above the sea-level. It lay almost direct ahead, and speculation became active as to what the wreck might be, and if the crew were still aboard of her. One fellow, who had his eye glued to a spy-glass for a steady spell, at length dropped it with the exclamation:

"By Gawd! It's the King's men. Idiot Crackthorpe and his crowd of marines stranded on the North Dogger Bank."

"Gimme the glass, Jock," cried another, seizing it. There was a holding of breath while the spyer took his observations.

"It is—sartain—them—blue uniforms—gold ep'lettes—white briches—holdin' their guns by one han'—an' the riggin' by t' other. They've got their rights at last, an' we've got the laugh. Curse 'em, let 'em wash, say I." And he passed the spy-glass to another.

"Let 'em swim!" said a third. "It's no affair of ours, Billy!" he continued. Then turning to the man at the wheel he shouted, "Put the helm up a bit, an' give 'em a wide berth."

But a calm deep voice suddenly rose above the excitement, saying: "Poot t' helm *doon* and keep her to coorze. An' thiz az well—the negzt time 'ee attempt to obey that hizzing zarpent I'll tie boath of 'eere negs in one, an' drop 'ee overboard. An' before we think of hoam, lads, we juzt got to zave they poor zoulz on the zandz. That'z the negzt lay."

Black Zam had spoken, with the result that the whole crew fell to heaping on the helmsman and his friend, the hizzing zarpent, the most opprobrious epithets of a smuggler's vocabulary.

It was indeed the unlucky *Argus* which had grounded on the edge of the Dogger at low water of a spring tide. The timbers were wrenched and leaking; the small boat had been carried away. One mast had already gone by the board, and the poor drenched sailors and marines were clinging to the rigging, cold and half exhausted. They had been in this plight since early morning, and it was with a thrill of joy that they at length perceived the approach of the trading sloop, which was now answering their signals of distress. It was quite impossible to render assistance with such a high sea running, so the *Gentle Pilgrim* stood by for some five hours till the gale blew itself out and the sea abated to such an extent as to allow the sloop to man and lower her boat. The *Argus* was now rapidly breaking up, and it was necessary to get the men off without further delay. Commander Crackthorpe was himself the last to leave his ship, and he had certainly been of real service in supporting the courage of his men by begging them and bidding them to meet their fate in a way becoming the King's service—"as dignified messengers, my lads, from King George (God bless him!) to King Death." He even went the length of shaking hands with every man jack of his crew.

"Great Ged," he suddenly exclaimed, turning round to gaze at the steersman of the smuggler's jolly-boat, in which he was the last to take his place. "Surely, sir, I had the pleasure of meeting you at the 'Loyalty Arms,' Watermouth, a few mornings ago? Your name is Jimmy Brail, and I must beg you—yes, by Ged, beg you—to believe that my opinion of your courage does not—no, sir—does *certainly* not coincide with Master Davy's!" And the old fellow looked uncommonly complimentary as he delivered the last few words.

Having arrived safely on board the sloop there was a scene of friendly confusion, for the deck of the little vessel was inconveniently crowded by the addition of the hands of the *Argus*. Hospitality was not wanting, and very speedily Black Zam procured an unnaturally large keg of spirits, and was soon administering the cordial with a liberal gen-

erosity to the wretched survivors of the wreck. The effect of the spirits was magical, and the poor devils who had clung half frozen to their dismembered ship, facing for several hours the horrors of the sea, were now plucked back from their demoralization and reinstated as rational and comfortable beings.

Lieutenant Crackthorpe's turn came last, for it was impossible to get him to touch any sort of refreshment before the wants of his men had been attended to. Meanwhile, however, he was taking his observations. He remarked upon the sloop's crew, and he pondered on the presence of Jimmy Brail, who, from the way he had handled the jolly-boat, was anything but a landlubber. And gradually there arose in his mind the idea that his saviours were possibly the notorious smugglers from Watermouth; but this was a conclusion he did not wish to become positive about unless under compulsion, as he foresaw the very awkward predicament of honor in which such a conclusion would place him. He therefore accepted the glass of hollands, of which he stood in dire need well concealed, with the precautionary remark: "I trust, captain, that these spirits are not illicitly obtained, for you must know that I, as an officer of His Majesty's service, could on no account suffer myself to taste a drop of it—no, begad, not a single drop if that were the case. You can assure me, I hope, that they are not contraband?"

"Zert'nly not gontryban', az fur az I know," Treherne began explaining, holding his black beard in his left hand to help the flow of thought and language.

But the Lieutenant did not or would not hear more. His conscience cleared like a crystal, and he gladly swallowed the sweet potion to the health of the "captain," whom, by the way, he had not recognised as Black Zam. Indeed, how should he, as his vision had never consciously rested on that individual?

Out of respect for his distinguished guest, Treherne had paused in his broken reply until the glass had been drained and returned with thanks. Then, resuming the thread, he continued:

"Gontryban' is as may be—perhaps that's foreign lingo. But if ye be azkin' me whether the zpirits be dooty free I'm bounden to say yez." And the jolly freebooter made the confession with no show of shame.

Now the Lieutenant had half expected what was coming, and found reason to congratulate himself on having outflanked his own conscience by manœuvring the spirits down his throat on a misunderstanding. This manœuvre had given him the opportunity of fortifying the body against possible contingencies, he thought, and meanwhile the hollands were spreading a comfortable glow which should make him more capable of dealing with the circumstance which now considerably modified the situation from his point of view. His eye wandered to the stern rail of the sloop, and there he saw in bright gold letters the legend "The Gentle Pilgrim." That clenched it. Then his eye wandered to where his marines were crowded together in the fore part of the ship—a goodly crowd, with guns and dry powder, outnumbering by many the "Gentle Pilgrims." He considered the point. It was an awkward situation, indeed, but he realized in a twinkling that he was master of it. Then with an impetuosity which was worthy to precede reflection he called his men sharply to attention, and they lined up on the deck straight and tall, while every one stood silent. His voice fell solemnly on the ship thus, as he turned to the black-bearded skipper:

"It is my duty to inform you that certain facts have come to my knowledge within the last few moments which compel me to proclaim you, Samuel Treherne, and all your men here, prisoners of the King."

It was silent before, but now the silence froze hard and grew solid. Men could not believe their ears, and waited as if to receive a repetition of the incredible. And the silence might have continued for ever—indeed, some who were present and profess to know say it certainly would, had not a bland, persuasive voice risen up from the back of the crowd and precipitated itself full on the ear of the "master of the situation."

"If that's a fact, m' lord, I'll take ten guineas of your lordship to complete the bargain." And the businesslike Davy advanced, rubbing his hands, through an avenue made for him by the "Gentle Pilgrims."

It was too much even for Lieutenant Crackthrope, and the ridiculousness of the affair forced him to relax his severity in a guffaw of genuine laughter which had contagious consequences.

"I'll settle my debt with you, Davy, you hopeless hypocrite, at a later date, and you shall have what I promised without fail. But in the interests of accuracy I would remind you, my friend, that the terms were pounds, not guineas," a point about which Master Davy was regularly rallied for the rest of his life by his friends at Watermouth.

All this time Black Zam had pulled his beard as it had never been pulled before. At length he spoke:

"I doan' zee thiz at all. Why, mun, zuppoze I had left 'ee on the wrack, what then? 'Ee doan' think, do 'ee, az I zaved 'ee zo 'z 'ee could make uz prisoners?"

"Not at all, Treherne, not at all," returned the Lieutenant. "But a man must do his duty, and if he don't—great Ged—he's no man. I think I know my duty, and as an officer of the King (God bless him!) I am obliged, you understand—it's all so clear, you see. On the other hand you must—yes, begad, you must—believe in my gratitude for your timely help."

"I be dommed if I 'ee h'ard of gratitood loike that'n, to make a man prisoner after he's zaved 'ere loife."

Lieutenant Crackthorpe's adhesion to duty was now beginning to give way before his better feelings. He saw the monstrous ingratitude of doing an injury to those who had so generously conferred a lasting benefit upon him and his at great risk to themselves. It is true that the object of his life had recently been to capture this very gang of freetraders, and here they were in the hollow of his hand. Still, duty has its limitations, and shall not, with a manly man, be allowed to transgress its boundaries. So he made a temporary shuffle in this way.

"Gentlemen," he began, graciously, "I have thought over this matter a second time, and although the facts I referred to do legally —yes, by heaven, legally—incriminate all who are concerned with the present voyage of this boat, still, upon other considerations which I need not enter into, I do for the present suspend the power which I have to arrest you, and declare instead that my previous proclamation is hereby revoked and canceled."

This then was the Lieutenant's method of confessing that he had made a monstrous mistake of the head, and that his gracious Majesty the King must rest content without this batch of prisoners. Though the reversal of the decision was

possibly not competent to affect his Majesty's habitual placidity, yet this sudden change of front was naturally received by the crew of the "Gentle Pilgrim" with a feeling akin to suspicion, and they felt uneasy as to the ultimate result as they watched the hard-browed Lieutenant pacing a plank on the weather side of the ship, plunged in deepest thought. He evidently had a mental nut to crack which was of the hardest, and, judging from the expression of his face, when cracked found not to contain the sweetest of kernels.

At length the quay was reached, and there stood the astonished population of Watermouth, breathlessly waiting for the solution of the amazing problem which faced them. King's men and free-booters all together in a smugglers' boat—what could it mean?

The *Gentle Pilgrim* was soon made fast to her moorings, whilst the silent crowd of spectators retired a little to make room for the marines to draw up on the landing-stage. These were followed by the crew of the *Argus* who took up a position in the immediate rear. Lastly Lieutenant Crackthorpe leapt ashore and stood at the head of his men, all facing the little sloop as she swayed gently at her hawsers. Treherne and his companions saw that the decisive moment had come, and they simultaneously turned their gaze on the Lieutenant, who at once commenced to address them:

"Captain Treherne, for myself and in the name of the crew of the *Argus*, I thank you from the bottom of my heart for the help which you and your brave comrades have rendered us, and I beg you to forget that I ever—ever—eh, eh—presumed—yes, presumed, why not —presumed to use my power against you in return for your—for your—courage and kindness. Had I acted with strict fairness to my Government I should of course have acted with—with—what you might perhaps call ingratitude to you, and I chose therefore to—to—that is to say—exactly as I have chosen. And, now, gentlemen, having got myself into this predicament there is nothing left me but to surrender myself to my Admiral to be court-martialed for having failed to do my duty. Men of the *Argus*, right face, quick march!" And the marines, shouldering their muskets, for once followed their commander with something of sympathy as he led them stiffly away through the applause of the people.

# IN the Twinkling of an Eye: A Forest Romance, by Helen M. Givens*

LAL OLIVER came to the cabin door and looked out over the blackened stumps of the clearing, wrapping her bare arms in her apron as she felt the chill autumnal air of the Sierra. Her eyes vaguely followed the smoke of a forest fire not far away in the timber; but a listlessness in the attitude of her tall, well-knit figure indicated a lack of interest in her surroundings reaching deeper than the mere indifference of custom.

A tawny wolfish-looking dog sat on his haunches gazing expectantly at her. He whined when she took no notice of him, then sidled over to lick her hand. She shook him off impatiently, turning her handsome dark face broodingly toward the forest. When a man appeared at the edge of the clearing and vaulted over the fence, the watching in which there had been neither hope nor desire was ended, for she turned from the door, busying herself about the dinner keeping warm upon the hearth.

Oliver walked round to the lean-to, stopping to fill a tin basin at the barrel near the door. Despite the wood-chopper's slouch in his shoulders, he looked a son of the forest, tall and powerful, as he plunged his head in the cold water, splashing it over his brawny neck and chest with a healthy disregard of the touch of frost in the air. At midday he was usually a stranger to the niceties of what he termed "washin' up," and a close observer might have suspected a desire to gain time—so deliberate were his movements.

When he at last entered the cabin his dinner was on the table. He looked at his wife tentatively, but her shoulder

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was turned toward him and she gazed persistently out of the window: so he sat down and ate, casting occasional glances at her motionless figure. The hound had stolen in and crouched near him, watching with slavering jaws eager for morsels. He found his master unresponsive.

After a time Oliver rose, pushing his chair back noisily, and reached for the pipe lying on a projection of the chimney. Greatly as he desired certainty, he yet felt the terror the unknown inspires, dreading the moment when Lal's silence should be broken, and his sin against her, that only yesterday had appeared so far off and impersonal, should be laid bare between them, stripped of all disguise. He had an air of nerving himself as he said, "I heard Dave Erickson was back."

There was no response. Taking out a pouch he began filling his pipe, pushing down the tobacco with an unsteady thumb. He knew Lal had seen Dave. Nevertheless he felt goaded to ask, "Has he been here?"

"Yes."

Oliver stooped to scoop up a coal from the hearth, finding some difficulty in balancing it to a nicety. He was conscious of the necessity of giving his sluggish wits time to prepare for the approaching crisis, while he was dimly aware of that hitherto unsuspected familiar within, urging him to hurry a catastrophe his every-day self shrank from. He drew a long whiff before he asked, doggedly pushing his questioning, "What did he come for?"

As the woman turned, her husband shrank visibly under the lash of her eyes.

"He came to tell me you had lied," she replied with deliberation.

His huge lumbering frame was trembling, as Oliver stumbled up from the hearth, steadying himself against a chair. "Lal, he—told——"

She confronted him like some sorely wounded wild thing.

"Everything—the whole story. The message callin' him to his dyin' mother; the letter he sent to me by you—it didn't reach me."

Involuntarily he glanced toward a cleft in a log over the fireplace, then looked hastily away, moistening his dry lips. She went on unheeding.

"Why should I talk? You know it all—how the old hags

about the mountains jeered and gossiped over their pipes because he'd left me almost on the weddin'-day." She broke into a mirthless laugh. "But you were willin' enough to take what they said he'd flung away. You devil, you've ruined my life."

"Don't say it, Lal!" he cried, entreatingly. "God knows I've loved you always. You'd never give me any hope—sometimes you seemed to hate me; and then at last when you'd grown a little kinder and I thought maybe you'd learn to care for me—Dave came and I saw it was all up with me."

The woman's face darkened and she broke in with fierce heat. "All's up with you now. Don't you see it? If you were half a man you would."

She was shaking with passion. A picture of her desolate youth rose before her, the girlhood embittered by the tyrannical old grandfather who had made her a drudge and never given her a kind word. She recalled the day she had questioned him about the mother she had never seen. Even her bold spirit had quailed before his paroxysm of rage; and from that time she had seemed set apart from other girls—girls who had mothers. She had been on the offensive or defensive from childhood to womanhood. Then the men from the logging camps began to find business with her grandfather and to cast covert glances at her as she went about her work. She had hated them as she hated their mothers and sisters, but when Dave came with his good nature and taking ways all was changed. She could not have told why there was more melody in the notes of the birds, or why the flowers had taken on newer and gayer attire. She knew only that it was so.

A long sigh from the man who had sunk beside the table, his head in his arms, recalled her. Fool that she had been! To hide her hurt and silence the tongues of women she despised, she had set this barrier between her and the man she loved. As he raised his head and looked at her with bloodshot eyes she wondered how she had ever endured him.

"Lal," he said, at last, "I don't deny I've wronged you—"

"You don't dare," she interrupted, sneeringly.

"But I've done my best since, to make you happy."

"Your best! you've done your worst. You've parted me from the only man in the world I could have cared for.

Any other woman would have done for you."

He started up with a gesture of protest, but she went on. "Why couldn't you've let me alone? Any of the girls on the Flat would've married you for the askin'. Why must you pick out the only one who didn't care?" She flung up her arms despairingly. "I can't breathe in the same house with you—I'll leave."

Oliver caught her arm. "Lal, you'd never leave me—You're my wife—I—"

"You count on that?" she cried. "What do I care for a few words said over us—lies, lies all! I love Dave. I'm no wife of yours."

She flung him off and ran out of the cabin.

He made no attempt to follow her. That she would really leave him, he did not believe. It was not the custom of the mountain women. They were in the habit of accepting their marital infelicities stolidly. But he understood her implacable disposition well enough to know how impossible forgetfulness or forgiveness would be now that she had discovered his treachery, and even his dull imagination was capable of realizing something of what life might be, robbed of even her toleration.

A log falling upon the hearth and sending a shower of sparks to his feet roused him at last to a realization of the passage of time, and slouching his hat over his eyes, he started to leave the cabin. A sudden remembrance arrested him. If Lal had found the letter he had been fool enough not to destroy—he winced at the thought of her reading it, perhaps talking it over with Dave, and hurrying to the fireplace he drew from a cleft in a log above it a soiled and rumpled piece of paper. At the sight of it, a gust of passion seized him. "Damn him!" he muttered. "Twice I've almost had her, and both times he's come between." He thrust the paper down in the ashes, grinding it fiercely with his heel, then left the cabin.

The smoke of the forest fire had settled low over the clearing, but he was hardly conscious of it or of the smell of burning wood filling the air. The stirring of the shallows in his weak and easy-going nature had revealed hitherto unsuspected depths, and his whole being was convulsively resisting the new order of things as he strode along. In a few moments he had reached the little opening in the timber

where his partners were already at work, splitting shakes. At any other time he would have been greeted by a volley of rough jests at his tardiness, now the men had graver matters to consider.

"You'd better be gettin' ready to move out o' this," remarked Jeff Strother. "Since the wind's changed the fire's bearin' straight down on us."

Oliver removed his hat, passing his hand over his head as if to rouse himself, but he did not reply.

"What in the thunder's the matter with you, man?" exclaimed the other. "Any one'd think you'nd the old woman'd had a scrap instead o' billin' and cooin' like turtle doves."

Oliver winced, but ignored the inference.

"The fire does seem to be coming this way," he replied, glancing from the piles of shakes to the smoke drifting between the trees.

Jeff bit off a chew of tobacco with a vicious snap. "If it does we'll lose every blamed shake and our whole summer's work. There's no use fightin' it—the underbrush's too thick."

"Red" Johnson spat on his hands and hefted his ax. "Well, if you'd all taken my advice—" he was beginning, but he broke off to dodge the block the other threw at him. "Don't let's have that all over again," said Jeff. "We might as well finish this fellow we're sawin', and then if things don't look more promisin' we can knock off work for the day and see what night'll bring."

As they returned to the sawing Oliver did not join them. He sat down on a log apparently engaged in tightening his ax head. In reality he was watching Dave Erickson whom he had caught sight of coming down the old disused trail from the Flat. He was walking slowly, his hands in his pockets, his eyes intent upon the ground. Oliver wondered dully why he should choose this path, then remembered that the fire had probably cut off the ordinary travel-way. If Lal had gone to her grandfather's cabin to cook the food it was her daily custom to prepare for him, Dave had met her again. He ground his teeth at the thought, running his fingers over the sharp edge of his ax with a wish that his enemy might be delivered into his hands. His eyes roving from Jeff and "Red" to the approaching figure and back again, suddenly dilated and a feeling of savage exulta-

tion flamed up. At the rate Dave was walking he was almost certain to arrive full in the track of the falling tree. The men had no thought of any one approaching by the old trail choked and almost obliterated by underbrush. It was safe—no one would suspect him—he had only to stay his voice and hand. If the fire once reached the clearing and the shakes caught, everything would be swept away and Dave Erickson blotted out as though he had never existed.

The great pine, a giant among its fellows, was tottering to its fall; yet so straight and perfect was its poise that Jeff, as chief executioner, advanced, mallet and wedge in hand to give the death blow. Oliver felt his clenched hands moisten as he measured with his eyes the space Dave would have to traverse before reaching the fatal point. The muffled stroke of the mallet rang out on the frosty air and he was conscious of nothing but the fear that his victim would be startled and realize his danger. Dave walked evenly on, scarcely lifting his eyes. Then the tree swayed, trembling throughout its entire length, righted, itself and stood motionless, while the birds among its branches sang on, forgetting their momentary alarm. In that second Mat Oliver experienced a sudden revulsion of feeling; the blackness of the cowardly crime he would have added to his treachery was revealed to him and he started forward, shouting a hoarse warning that was taken up by the men, who saw only his danger. Dave fled back into the forest, but as Oliver turned to save himself, he seemed to hear again, Lal's words, "I love Dave. I'm no wife of yours." He hesitated—glancing confusedly from side to side. In that second he lost his chance or—gave it up, and as the monster plunged downward, falling with a crash reverberating from canyon to canyon, Mat Oliver disappeared in the chaos of broken and twisted branches marking its death agony.

# THE Red Cat. The Story of a Mystery, by Harold Begbie*

IN the days when Yondercot was a residence of the Bishops of Lammerton, a small party of men was one winter night gathered about the hall fire, the Bishop himself occupying the center of the group. The ladies of the house party had retired to their rooms after a long evening spent in telling and hearing ghost stories, and the men were now left alone to the quiet of the splendid hall and the humming of a clear fire. They sat for a few minutes in silence, all eyes brooding upon the glow of the fire, and then one of them remarked that every legend and every ghost story in the world must, he thought, have some more or less intelligent foundation in fact. Another quoted Balzac's "Christ in Flanders," and told how it was a common belief among certain sailors that Christ still walked upon the sea. Then the conversation dropped again till the Bishop—who had not yet contributed a ghost story to the sequence—leaning forward in his chair, his elbows on his knees, his hands held out toward the fire, remarked that concerning one ghost story he knew never yet had he been able to trace any relation to fact, unless, indeed, the story was actually true throughout.

They all begged for the story, and though he glanced smilingly at the slow-ticking clock and protested the lateness of the hour, he yielded at last to their persuasion, and told the following extraordinary story. One of the party tells me that he can never forget the effect of that recital, told in the low quiet voice of the Bishop, as the old man sat there in the great paneled hall, leaning forward toward the fire, with the flicker of the flames in his face and about his silver hair, his long white hands stretched out to the fire and his gentle gaze ranging from face to face, as he sought to bring home to their minds some particular point in the story. Outside in the undulating park, now three inches under snow, a wild gale was tearing at

*From the Cornhill Magazine.

the trees and throwing great gusts of hail against the close-curtained windows.

Some years ago, when I was traveling in Sweden (said the Bishop), I found myself in the neighborhood of the forest of Kolmorden, and one day as I wandered with my guide away from the shores of Lake Vetter we came upon the ruin of a hovel, whose broken roof, shattered windows, crumbling walls, and its garden long overgrown with weeds and tangling creepers, suggested so powerfully to my mind mystery and romance—for its situation was at once magnificent and desolate—that I asked how it came to its present ill-fortunes. From my guide, and subsequently from the Bishop of Upsala, I learned the story of this broken house, and I learned, moreover, that the truth of the legend was undoubted throughout the whole of Svealand and the northern part of Götaland.

Toward the middle of the eighteenth century the hut was occupied by a man who worked in the forest, did a little fishing on the lake, and cultivated the garden which I found a veritable jungle. His name was Hans Sparre, a silent, grim-faced man, as completely devoted to Lutheran doctrines as he was to his invalid wife Fredrika, and their little golden-haired child Marie. Theirs was a hard struggle for existence, fought out amid the loneliness of those wooded heights which separate southern from middle Sweden, but they appear to have been happy in their way, and the peddler who visited them once a month told many a tale afterward of the father's tenderness, the mother's solicitude, and the little Marie's eagerness for a story. "It was with her," he would say, "never a pretty ribbon, never a trinket—no, no, it was always a story of ghosts and the other world." And he gave her freely of Birgitta's Uppenbarelser.

With this small family lived a black cat, brought by the same genial peddler as a present for little Marie. It shared the frugality of the cottage, devoted itself to the child, and seldom showed any disposition to go beyond the limits of the garden. Because of its solemn demeanor, which squared so finely with his own notions, Hans Sparre christened the creature Martin, after his favorite divine.

Well, thus they lived—the hard toiling peasant, the sickly wife, the bright child, and this solemn old cat, Martin.

One very turbulent winter night as they sat before

a wood fire, the child lying on the floor at their feet with Martin's black head on her lap, the wife suddenly touched her husband's arm and called upon him to listen.

"'Tis the wind," he said, stroking her hand.

"Nay, it was a cry I heard. A thin cry, far off."

"A bird caught by a lynx."

"Perhaps," said the little Marie, jumping up, "it is a fairy, and she wants to come in."

At that moment something moved against the door, and once again a low cry entered the room from the boisterous night without. Martin rose, arched his back, and drew back his teeth, hissing at the door. The child clutched him up and held him against her breast, while Hans rose from his chair and walked heavily toward the door. Fredrika, with knitting idle in her lap, one finger at her lip, watched him over her shoulder.

He lifted the clumsy wooden latch, and pressing his hand against the door so that the wind should not drive it in, allowed it to open a few inches, while with blinking eyes he peered out into the night.

Scarce was the door three inches open when a cat slunk in through the narrow aperture and padded quickly to the fire. The child gave a cry of joy, Martin leaped out of her arms and rubbed his head against the neck and shoulder of the new-comer, and Fredrika turned full round in her chair to her husband now closing the door.

"Where has it come from?" she cried, her eyes wide with astonishment.

Hans laughed gutturally: "Out of the night, my Fredrika."

"God has sent it!" cried little Marie.

"We know nothing more of it," said the father, coming back to his chair.

Then they turned their gaze on the new-comer.

It was a red cat—a far deeper shade of red than the cats we should describe as sandy—and its fur was miraculously luminous, a bright sheen giving it almost the hue of an orange. For the rest it was well nourished, and though it had come from a reeling night its coat was dry and warm. It gave no token of uneasiness on finding itself in strange surroundings, but settled itself upon the hearth, its green eyes set steadily on the sputtering wood fire, and apparently unconscious of

the rubbings and purrings with which Martin continued to welcome its arrival.

There was some little talk between Hans and his wife concerning this additional strain upon their slender commissariat, but it was speedily decided that the cat should not be turned out into the storm, and little Marie vowed that she would share her meals with it so that it might remain with them. From that night it took up its abode with this simple family, and it was given the distinguished name of Luther by Hans himself.

Many weeks passed, and the cat showed no inclination to leave its home; indeed, it was quite as content with the narrow limits of the garden as Martin himself. The two cats were inseparable, though Luther appeared to take no interest in Martin, and the child looked after them both with a perfectly divided affection.

One day when Fredrika was too ill to move about, and Marie was making a brave show of performing the household duties, the red cat suddenly showed a strange and affectionate interest in his black brother. He left the hearth, purred continuously, walked round and round Martin, nosing at the black cat's face, sidling against his loins, even putting his paws on Martin's shoulder, and then, with one final caress of the other's face, stalked solemnly through the open door into the garden. Martin followed.

Little Marie, who had watched this sudden affection on the red cat's part with almost breathless interest, was about to march out with them to see its conclusion, when the kettle boiled over, and all her attention was given to the business of the fireside. When she had set the kettle in the fender, however, she went into the garden and looked for the cats.

They were not to be seen.

She hunted under the bushes and amid the vegetables; she looked into the byre at the side of the cottage occupied by their little cow, but nowhere could she discover the two cats. Then it struck her that a miracle had happened, and that they had gone beyond the boundaries of the garden. She darted away from the shed, and hurried through the garden. At the extreme end of the field, just entering the wood, the child descried the red cat, and behind it, following with due solemnity, her older friend, the black. She saw them enter

the wood, and then she ran in breathless to tell her mother the news.

Hans arrived home, and was incontinently told the tale. "Ah!" said he, "our new friend Luther is evidently a hunter. There will be a bird or two the less in the forest to-morrow."

The night came, and still the cats remained in the forest. In the morning, also, there was no sign of them. Marie wept bitterly for her playmates, and to all the comfortable assurances of her father, protested her conviction that a wolf or a bear had killed them.

On the evening of the following day, as the family sat at their meal, there was a movement at the door as though it were being pushed from the outside, and little Marie, crying out that the cats had returned, sprang joyfully from her chair, and standing tiptoe, lifted the latch of the door and admitted—the red cat alone. It stalked in as unconcernedly as on its first appearance, and moved directly to the hearth; there it crouched, blinking at the fire, and casting not a single glance at the other inhabitants of the room.

"Thou knowest thy home, then, Master Luther!" said Hans, from the table.

"And where is Martin, where is Martin?" cried Marie, bending over the cat.

"Martin, I fear, will never come back," answered the father; "he was too old to begin the work of hunting. You must be content with this Rufus."

And he had spoken truth, for Martin was never seen again.

But Luther appeared to be content with his excursion, and did not show any signs of a desire to revisit the forest. If he was a hunter, it was only by caprice, and a more domesticated cat it would have been difficult to find. He sat eternally before the fire, blinking with sleepy eyes at the sputtering wood, only on the rarest occasions going beyond the threshold of the cottage.

It was some four weeks after his return that this red cat betrayed signs of his old restlessness. Fredrika was at the table plying a busy needle, with a great pile of flannel before her, which had been brought the day before by their friend the peddler, and Marie was sitting on the doorstep telling herself stories, with her eyes fixed dreamily upon the blue sky. Luther blinked upon the hearth. The red cat got up suddenly from the fire, paced two or three times round the

room, with the same meaningless intensity as we see in a caged panther, and then swerving in the midst of its circle, it leapt quietly to the door, and rubbed its head against Marie's arm, mewing up into her face, and padding on her hands with its sheathed paws. Then it moved off down the garden, and Marie turned her head into the room and whispered mysteriously to Fredrika, "Luther has gone to look for Martin!"

The mother glanced over the rims of her spectacles—she was counting stitches at that moment—and nodded her head, returning instantly to her intricate task.

But when she looked up again, Marie had gone from the door. The mother called her, but there was no answer. She bundled down her needlework, drew the spectacles from about her ears, and got up calling—"Marie! Little Marie!" She was at the door in a minute.

"Marie! Little Marie!" she called, looking left and right amid the bushes. Then raising her eyes she saw straight ahead of her the child walking slowly to the fringe of the forest, the red cat, a couple of feet ahead, at that very moment disappearing in the trees.

She ran to the end of the garden screaming at the top of her voice. The child did not even turn her head, and in the next minute she had vanished into the forest. Then Fredrika sprang from the garden, and ran across the field, calling loudly to her child as she stumbled over the rough ground. Marie had never strayed from the garden before, and there were dangerous beasts still ranging through the mighty forest of Kolmorden. She ran, breathless, terror in her soul.

But before she reached the forest, she heard her name called, and turning about saw Hans coming up from the lake, an oar on his shoulder. She stopped and beckoned him wildly to her side. He set down the oar and the basket in his other hand, and came striding toward her. She screamed to him that he should run, and the huge fellow set to it with a will, reaching her white and breathless.

"What is it?" he gasped.

"Marie! Little Marie!" she answered, flinging herself into his arms. Then she pointed to the forest. The next instant he had bounded away from her side, and was soon lost to her sight.

She stumbled after him, and as she went she heard his great voice shouting their child's name through the trees. The hills rang with it. Guided by these cries, she made her way to his side, and together they searched hither and thither till the night fell; but they saw nothing of Marie, and no sound answered their cries. It was dark when they reached the cottage.

"The red cat has decoyed her," said Hans, his lips trembling.

Fredrika could do nothing but sob.

"When it returns I will slay it," cried Hans, setting his teeth hard. "I will slay it when it returns. With my two hands—thus!"

"But if Marie does not come back!" cried the mother, lifting her tear-stained face to his.

He jumped to his feet. "She will return! She shall return!" And seizing up his gun, he rushed out of the cottage and vanished into the night.

Fredrika stood at the door, staring into the darkness, listening for a sound.

Ever and anon she heard him calling the child's name, and now and then a Siberian jay croaked upon the night, but there were wide silences on every side, and she stood dry-eyed, the insistent humming of stillness singing in her ears. The cries of her husband ceased altogether. The night became absolutely silent. She stood there in the darkness, feeling herself alone in the midst of a wilderness. She began to be afraid. Then, after long hours of this aching silence, a faint sound reached her. She strained her ears, craning her head forward from the door. It came again, a sharp, hissing, quickly smothered sound. She clasped her hands, listening so intently that she was conscious only of the loud singing in her ears.

The night was drifting away, and a grayness in the gloom announced the coming of day. Straining her gaze through this yielding darkness, she saw a figure looming toward her. Again she heard the sharp, hissing sound, and in the next minute her husband lurched against her, giving way to the sobs he had striven to keep back, weeping like a child upon her shoulder.

Well, the child was lost—utterly, completely lost—and the peddler carried the tale on his journey, so that many little children throughout Svealand wept for the pretty Marie whom

they had never seen. Hans and Fredrika were broken-hearted. Their lives had been bound up in the little one, and they mourned for her as a man may mourn for his own lost soul.

It was a few weeks after her loss—and while their grief was still too poignant for speech, so that they seldom exchanged words, and never spoke about the lost child—that the red cat once more made its appearance. It entered the house at night, rubbing at the door for admittance, and moving straight to the hearth as on former occasions. To Fredrika's surprise, Hans did not lay hand either to his hunting-knife or to his gun. He jumped eagerly to his feet at the first sound of the rubbing at the door, as though he had been listening for that very sound ever since Marie's disappearance. Then, when the creature had entered, he closed the door, returned to his chair, and sat with face of iron gazing at the cat. His wife feared to speak to him.

Later she called him from his reverie, saying it was time they should retire.

"Go thou to bed," he answered; "I watch here." And she left him. In the morning he was still sitting in his chair, his eyes fixed upon the cat, the cat blinking peacefully at the ashes in the fireplace. And all that day he remained at home. Fredrika went about her duties, pausing oftentimes to observe the silent man sitting heavily in his chair, the fierce brooding eyes of him set determinedly upon the red cat.

At night he said between set teeth, "God give me strength that I do not throttle thee before thou showest me my child."

And that night, too, he sat up, and on the following day he remained at home. Every night with great fear he spoke to the cat: "God give me strength that I do not throttle thee before thou showest me my child."

And one day, when Fredrika was ill with the extra work that had fallen to her, the cat suddenly rose from the hearth, paced restlessly round and round the room, and then sprang upon Sparre's knees, stretching up her face to rub against his cheek. He shuddered violently, his hands twitching at his side, and between his teeth he said: "God help me, or I shall kill thee, thou cursed one!" So horrible did it seem to him to be caressed by this red cat.

But when it sprang from his knee and went through the door into the garden, he gave a loud shout of joy. For the first time since Marie's disappearance his face became radiant with delight. "I shall find her!" he cried to his wife. And, seizing up his hunting-knife, without further word to Fredrika, he went from the cottage, and followed the red cat into the forest.

Fredrika, weak and wasted, shuffled to the door, and, leaning against the side, watched them disappear—the cat moving slowly and unconcernedly, the man following chafingly behind. Then she turned back into the cottage, sank wearily into a chair and waited.

For many days the wretched woman waited, and Hans never returned. She was growing infirm, and the loneliness of her desertion began to prey upon her mind. When the peddler came by on his rounds a week after the disappearance of Hans he found her shattered in body, her mind so shaken that she was almost bereft of volition. She told him her story, and after he had given her food and helped her to the bed, the good fellow mounted his pony—leaving his wares behind him at the cottage—and galloped at full speed to the village in the valley.

The news spread, search parties set out from all parts of the country, and soon the great forest had been beaten from one end to the other—but all in vain. There was no trace anywhere of the black cat, of little Marie, of Hans Sparre, or the red cat which had decoyed them out of existence. For some weeks excitement ran high, and certainly throughout the greater part of Svealand people talked of nothing else. It was an event in their lives, and the tale, carried by travelers and peddlers, was told and retold a thousand times throughout the country. But the search parties soon abandoned their fruitless efforts, the kind people who had tended poor Fredrika withdrew to their homes, and once more the unhappy woman was left alone in her misery.

On the very first night of her loneliness the red cat returned. In precisely the same unconcerned fashion it pushed through the opening door and padded straight to the hearth, curling itself up there with the calmest content, as though it had never gone away. Fredrika followed her husband's example, and watched it. Night and day, praying for help from Heaven, she sat alone in the deserted hut with the red

cat, waiting till it should lead her to the place where her husband and her child were now imprisoned.

The cat took no notice of her, staring straight before it, never asking for food and never sleeping—unless it slept when she herself fell into weary slumber. And Fredrika watched and watched, longing every day for the signal which should take her to her husband and their child. Days, weeks, a month passed, and every day death grew nearer and nearer to the poor woman alone with the red cat. Her cheeks fell in, her flesh wasted, she became racked with the intolerable tortures of hunger. Alone in her chair by the side of a fireless grate, she sat in utter desertion—watching the red cat and hearing the muffled steps of death drawing nearer and nearer. She did not fear death—but presently she began to fear the cat.

It turned its head one day, and, crouching peacefully on the hearth, stared up into her eyes. It was the first time they had ever looked each into the other's eyes. You may imagine the effect upon the woman's mind. None of us, I suppose, has ever experienced the prolonged stare of an animal; as a rule their eyes blink, close, or turn away, unable to endure our gaze. But this cat who, remember, had led her husband and child to destruction, sat there upon the hearth, its head turned toward her, and its green eyes fixed steadily upon her own. At first she hoped that it was about to lead her to the forest, but after a moment or two, when it showed no sign either of moving or of turning its gaze away, she began to grow afraid. Before terror possessed her completely she determined to kill it, unable to bear the fixity of its gaze; but when she tried to rise from her chair she discovered herself too weak to move, and then it was that horror seized her in its grip. She was the prisoner of the cat.

In vain she essayed to close her eyes; they refused to remain closed. And as she sat there, mesmerized by the glance of the cat, night fell, and in a little while darkness closed upon the room. But it was a darkness which could not shut out the terror of her situation; nay a darkness which increased the horror of it a hundredfold, for the green eyes of the cat, malignant and ghastly in the intensity of their gaze, burned through the blackness, and fixed her with their hate. And then, through this darkness, loomed the shape of the cat, at

first a blur of brown, then clear and defined in outline—a light red, and finally a flame of fire, luminous, unearthly. Alone in the blackness and solitude of the night, the wind blowing in through the open door bearing with it strange and eerie sounds from the forest without, the dying woman sat prisoned in her chair, gazing at the flaming cat upon the hearth, whose green eyes darted baleful fires into her own.

That night seemed to her like a lifetime of physical agony, and when morning came tardily out of the skies her reason was well-nigh exhausted. At the first flush of dawn the cat rose from the hearth, stretched itself luxuriously, and then without another glance at the woman began to pace slowly round the room. After a minute or so it sprang gladly to the door and vanished into the garden.

Fredrika strove to rise, but her strength had gone from her, and she fell back in her chair praying for death. Her mind collapsed as she realized that the cat had gone, and that it would never return to lead her to the place where Hans and Marie awaited her.

It was not until late in the evening that the peddler, a day or two late on his rounds, struck up the hillside and reached the cottage. He found Fredrika in the state I have described, and seeing that the poor creature was at her last gasp he determined to wait with her until the end. It was after he had given her nourishment and had carried her to the bed that she told him the story of the cat's appearance and disappearance, and so simply and so resignedly did she recite the story that he could not bring himself to doubt the truth of it.

That night the soul of Fredrika left her body, and when he had trimmed the lamp, so that she should not be left in darkness, and had covered the body reverently with a sheet, the peddler saddled his pony and set off to ride with the news to the village below. But as he went, so the legend declares, he heard a sound of gentle music from the forest—music so rare and wonderful that he unconsciously doffed his hat, believing himself in the presence of angels. He looked toward the forest, and through the darkness he saw a soft luminous mist—a light that moved slowly among the trees. He feared to approach nearer the forest, but he found himself so enchanted by the music and so spellbound by the mystery that he could not urge his pony forward. He remained on the side of the hill, his hands resting on the front of the saddle, his eyes fixed

upon the light moving through the forest. And presently the radiance became brighter, and in another minute the whole forest appeared to be illumined by this celestial splendor, and in the midst of it he saw the stark gaunt form of Hans Sparre with little Marie in his arms, and at his side Fredrika clinging to his arm, her face as radiant as theirs with a rapture that was unearthly, and they were singing a hymn of Tomas, Bishop of Strengnäs.

When they had passed from his vision the dawn was in movement, and shaking the rein, now clammy with dew, the peddler hurried down to the valley. As soon as his tale was told a party set off for the cottage, the priest going with them, and the peddler telling and retelling the mysteries he had witnessed that night as they struck up the hillside.

As they reached the cottage the lamp which the peddler had lighted shone dimly and ghostly in the morning brightness. They saw it directly they opened the door, and then, the priest uncovering, the rest following his example, they entered the cottage.

The bed was vacant.

The sheet with which the peddler had covered the body was tossed upon one side, the marks where a body had reposed were visible to all eyes—but the body of Fredrika had vanished as mysteriously as Hans and little Marie. For many minutes they stood gazing in awed silence at the bed, and then a cry of alarm from someone at the back of the little crowd brought them all turning hastily about in a state bordering on panic. "What is it? What is it?" they cried in one voice.

The peasant who had caused this sudden alarm pointed to a beam of wood amid the smoke-grimed rafters of the cottage.

And there, transfixed by the great hunting-knife of Hans Sparre, was the dead body of the red cat. It was bloodless.

# HOW the Dream Ended:

## A Widower's Romance, by E. Bénezit. Translated from the French by Lawrence B. Fletcher*

AFTER the wedding there was a supper at a boulevard restaurant and, after the supper, a dance. Early in the evening Marius Lournier approached the radiant young bride and extended his hand.

"Good-by, my child," he said. "Are you going so soon,

*Translated for Short Stories.

father? Please stay a little longer," Cécile coaxed, looking at him affectionately.

"No, you cannot persuade me. I feel—rather tired."

And he added with a dismal smile:

"I am not so young as I used to be."

He made his adieux to the bridal pair and walked slowly home to his cottage at Montrouge. The theaters were closing and the streets were full of animation, but he walked through the crowds unseeing and unheeding with his hands thrust deep in his overcoat pockets and his head bowed in a gloomy revery.

Marius Lournier was fifty years old, and possessed of a modest fortune and a philosophical disposition. He had long been a widower, and his experience of matrimony had not been pleasant enough to tempt him to repeat it.

He lived alone in the suburb of Montrouge in a little cottage surrounded by a garden, ate at restaurants and passed his evenings at a convenient café, smoking his pipe and playing cards with a select group of friends and neighbors.

A woman came every day to do his housework and went away when it was finished. One drizzling November night as he entered his garden his attention was attracted by the vaguely outlined figure of a woman who at that instant sank rather than sat down upon the public bench hard by. He peered through the darkness at the shadowy form and seeing that it did not move, mechanically re-opened the gate and walked toward it.

He found a girl of perhaps twenty, poorly clad but with an appearance of distinction. She seemed utterly exhausted and her face was bathed in tears. He questioned her gently but her replies were vague and unsatisfactory.

"But you cannot stay here in the rain," said Marius.

In spite of her resistance—which was but feeble, poor thing!—Marius raised her from the bench and drew her toward the house. When at last she was seated before a cheery fire she consented to tell her sad story.

Her name was Cécile Martel, and she was the daughter of an army captain who had died in the service. With her mother she had come to Paris in the hope of obtaining a

tobacco-shop license which had been promised to the widow long ago.

Their last articles of furniture, their few trinkets, had been sacrificed to obtain funds for the journey.

Soon after their arrival the mother had died very suddenly, leaving Cécile alone and almost penniless in the great city in which she did not know a human soul.

By dint of great economy the girl had contrived to live for a few weeks on the little money remaining in her purse; but, that morning, her landlady had informed her with great politeness that she must either pay her arrears of rent or go elsewhere.

She had wandered through the streets all day, without eating or resting, and at night had turned her steps instinctively toward the cemetery at Montrouge where her mother lay at rest.

This pitiful tale, told in almost inaudible tones, and interrupted by fits of shivering and weeping, affected Marius very deeply.

"And you have no relatives, no friends, to whom you can apply?" he asked.

"Not one—except my father's old friends and they are oh! so far away!"

"Well, my child," said Marius, impulsively, "you have one friend, at least. But first you must rest and refresh yourself. Afterward we will see what is best to be done."

He hastily got together the elements of a rudimentary banquet, but Cécile, in spite of her desire to show her appreciation of this unhoped-for succor, could not eat a mouthful. Though the room was warm, she shivered more and more, until at last, overcome by fatigue, she closed her eyes and fell asleep.

"This will never do," thought Marius. "She will get pneumonia or something in her damp clothes."

"If only there were a woman in the house! Then we could put the poor child to bed."

He wrapped a big cloak about her and fell to studying her face. It was not strikingly pretty, but it was a pleasing face and a *good* face. Its greatest beauty was now veiled—the large, velvety black eyes, tender and passionate. Suddenly she moaned, and then Marius saw that her face was scarlet and her breathing labored.

"Ah! Just what I feared!" he exclaimed and ran to fetch a physician. The doctor pronounced the case very serious and sent a nurse to take care of the girl during the

night. In the morning she must be sent to the hospital.

"The hospital!" thought Marius, who had a horror of hospitals.

"Hasn't the poor child suffered enough already?"

He lay awake all night, thinking, and when the ambulance came in the morning he curtly sent it away.

Months elapsed before Cécile was pronounced out of danger. Marius Lournier found himself intensely interested in the battle of life and death, and was overjoyed when the physician informed him that the crisis was passed.

The childless widower felt drawn toward his protégée by an almost paternal affection. When he guided the faltering steps of the convalescent to the arm chair installed in the sunniest nook of the little garden and she said:

"How good you are to me!"

He felt his eyes moisten, but all he said was:

"It is so easy to be good to you, my dear."

But soon youth and health resumed their sway. Cécile wrought a wonderful transformation in the lonely cottage. Thoroughly feminine in taste, she loved everything that is pretty and delicate, and Marius, enchanted by the simple elegance which had succeeded to the former disorder of his home, smiled gratefully upon the fairy who had brought about the change.

He took his meals at home, and long conversations with his Chatelaine replaced the nightly sessions at the card-table. He was so happy, basking in this mild and wholesome physical and moral atmosphere, that he took no account of the flight of time. But Cécile was less blind. After some months of this idyllic existence she suddenly became very serious and sad. Marius, greatly surprised, questioned her, and finally she said:

"I think that I ought not to live any longer at your——"

But Marius frowned so fiercely that she checked herself.

"Oh, do not doubt my affection," she exclaimed. "I am not ungrateful, believe me. But I must earn my own living. My self-respect demands that."

"Well, well!" said Marius, impatiently. "We will speak of that to-morrow."

His face was very suggestive of a bull-dog's, and all that day he never opened his lips—not even to reply to Cécile's timid and contrite "Good-night."

Next morning he said, abruptly:

"You say you are not ungrateful. Prove it."

"How?"

"By not leaving me to die of loneliness. Oh! I am selfish, I know, but I cannot help it. I have become accustomed to you. If you abandon me my life will be so horribly empty!"

He was so humble and so evidently sincere that Cécile yielded.

But, that very day, a friendly neighbor, an old lady, said to him:

"My dear M. Lournier, I feel it my duty to tell you that people are beginning to talk. I know that you are the soul of honor and that Cécile is an angel, but evil tongues will wag. Why don't you stop them?"

"How can I?"

"By marrying Cécile."

"What! Do you imagine that she——"

"I imagine nothing. I know she is in love with you. Trust a woman's intuition."

And the old lady added with a smile:

"What if you are fifty, so long as you don't look it."

Marry Cécile? He? What an absurd idea!

But the more he thought about it the less absurd it appeared. And, looking squarely into his heart, he saw that he loved the girl passionately. The little fairy had given him back his youth and awakened the heart that he had thought dead for ever.

Ah! if the old lady's intuition were correct!

Then he began to pay great attention to his dress and manners. He even gave up his pipe. Cécile noticed his rejuvenation and complimented him upon it, frankly, and then he felt inspired to tell his love and ask her to be his wife.

She listened in smiling silence and, in a burst of grateful affection, put her hand in that of her benefactor and said: "Yes."

She loved him—or thought so. Was he not the pattern of goodness, of honor? Did she not owe him more than life? In return, the simple-hearted girl felt that she was glad to give him the happiness he asked.

The wedding was arranged to take place in the autumn.

Meanwhile Marius lived at a hotel, but came every day to his old house to see his young sweetheart, who always welcomed him with a smile of tender affection.

The summer wore on, and there came a time when the

smile gave place to grief and tears as soon as the unconscious lover's back was turned.

Then, one evening, he came and heard Cécile's voice and another's coming from the unlighted parlor. He recognized the other voice as that of a young architect who was spending his vacation with his mother, the lady who had suggested the marriage of Marius and Cécile.

The situation at once became horribly clear to Marius. He listened.

"You are unkind," Cécile was saying. "I *cannot* be your wife; you know that."

"I only know that I hate the old fool," the young man replied.

"Hush, Robert! You shall not insult him."

" I hate him, I say! He has ruined my life."

"He loves me, Robert, and I owe him everything. I have given him my promise—and I will keep it."

"But it is enough to drive one mad! I will tell him to his face that I love you—and that you love me!"

"If you love me as you say you do, Robert, you will let me do my simple duty."

Marius had heard enough. He went back to his hotel, staggering like a drunken man.

He was an old fool, then?

An *old* fool?

He asked his mirror and it told him the truth.

How had he come to forget his thin gray hair and the crows' feet about his eyes and to fancy that Cécile could really love him?

Yes! He was an old fool.

To a night of agony succeeded a heroic resolve.

He sought Cécile and said:

"My child, I have come to the conclusion that an old fellow like me who has been single so long had better remain single. I give you back your promise."

Cécile's heart leaped for joy, but she replied:

"I do not understand you, dear Marius."

"Hush!" said he. "Call me 'Father,' won't you, my dear?"

She comprehended the admirable self-abnegation expressed in these words, and cried:

"Oh, how good you are to me always—Father!"

"And now," said Marius with his old-time good-humored smile, "suppose we ask our neighbors to dinner."

Cécile put her head on her benefactor's shoulder, but closed her eyes to hide the joy that was in them.

Marius Lournier, after leaving his adopted child and her husband, returns to his lonely cottage.

As he opens the gate he sees, in fancy, a slender form sink exhausted on the bench as it did on that other night, a year ago. He enters the house. It is silent, for the first time within a year. The bird has flown. The dream is over.

# Swordsman's Adversary. The Story of a Salle d'Armes, by Walter Herries Pollock*

YOUNG, tall, broad in exact artistic proportion to his height, well-looking, well set-up and groomed, with a constantly changing play of expression on a face which in repose was distinctly interesting, Everard Knighton bore in his outward man the obvious promise of an inner man with whom converse and commune would be worth seeking and acquiring. True as an inner guard to his duties, this inner man in no wise betrayed the promise thus given. Despite his youth, as to which he looked younger than he actually was, Knighton had traveled much, seen and observed much, and had that peculiar gift in conversation which always sent a comrade away with the impression that he, the comrade, had been at his very best in talk. In his wanderings and sojournings in other lands, our Everard, having a naturally fine ear, had first picked up and afterwards mastered various European languages, and had some knowledge of more than one Eastern one. Furthermore, he had acquired a very considerable store of information, both usual and unusual, which he never obtruded or squandered, and never pedantically hid. Altogether, a man vastly pleasant as an acquaintance, more than valuable as a friend. As to his position, he was fortunately just not well enough off to be tempted into dilettante idleness, and pursuing his natural bent, which he worked hard to cultivate to its utmost, he had, at what is now considered an early age, made his mark as a fine and free-lance critic, as an author who had written well on more than one out-of-the-way subject involving research, and moreover as a novelist who, while his

*From Longman's Magazine.

inclination was to romance, could deal skilfully enough with the greater subtleties of life. It has to be added that while he was good at almost all games and sports of skill, he was particularly devoted to, and particularly excelled in, the use of "the white arm." Indeed, one of his books was largely concerned with the variations and niceties of sword play to be found in various countries. His theories were wholly good, and his practice was equal to them. Add to this that at the time to which we refer he was engaged to a particularly charming girl, a Miss Viola Torrens, and the situation is fully defined.

One fine summer's day, Knighton was sitting after luncheon in Kensington with Mrs. Torrens and her daughter, when the conversation turned on a recent display of fencing, in which various foreign masters and amateurs had taken part. Knighton, through ill-luck, had not been present, and was therefore eager to hear all about it from Mrs. Torrens and Viola, for whom he had procured tickets. He asked many questions, and as they both knew something of fence, he obtained lucid answers. He was inquiring about the method of a certain Italian master, when he suddenly interrupted himself with "I had nearly forgotten!"

"Forgotten what, Everard?" asked Mrs. Torrens.

Now, before we give his reply, it must be stated that Knighton was a devotee of Charles Lever, and that when quite a youth he had acquired a habit of quoting Dr. Barrett's favorite exclamation in "Charles O'Malley," "May the devil admire me!" and it was a habit which he had not yet succeeded in overcoming, though, for the sake of Viola, who disliked it, he had tried hard to do so. Thus it was that he thoughtlessly made answer to Mrs. Torrens, "May the devil admire me, but I'd forgotten about this afternoon!"

"It is quite possible," said Mrs. Torrens drily, "that the personage in question does admire you. You certainly express a wish for his admiration often enough to ensure it."

Viola only looked at him with gentle reproach in a pair of beautiful eyes that shone lustrous in a fragile-looking face.

"Upon my word," cried Knighton penitently enough, "I am most awfully sorry; I thought I really had cured myself of that detestable habit. Do forgive me."

"Everard dear," said Viola, "I do wish you could get rid of it; I don't like it one little bit."

"As far as I am concerned," observed Mrs. Torrens, "it is

no more to me personally than if you prefaced your valuable remarks with cock-a-doodle-do. But as Viola has just said, she does not like it. And then, supposing some day you came out with it in a serious and starched assembly of strangers."

"I suppose," said Everard, rather fatuously, "that it is because I am so afraid of doing that that I have never done it."

"On the contrary," replied Mrs. Torrens, "you may thank your star that you have never done it; your being afraid of it is the very thing to lead you into it."

"True," said the shamefaced Everard; "I spoke like a fool."

"And then," said Viola, "there's another phrase I have heard you use in absence of mind—an odious, a hateful phrase. You know the one I mean, Mummy."

"I think," Mrs. Torrens answered, "that I do; you refer doubtless to the singular desire expressed in the words, "May the devil fly away with me!" It is not a pretty phrase, you will admit, and there seems to me to be a special reason against your using it."

"And what may that be?" asked Knighton.

"You might be taken at your word," the lady made answer. "And now suppose you tell us what it was you forgot about this afternoon."

"Why," was the reply, "there is a special gathering at little Grison's *salle d'armes*, and I have half promised to go."

"Who is to be there?" Mrs. Torrens inquired.

In reply, Knighton named several amateurs of justly high reputation, and added, "And there is a man who is in London only for a very short time—a somewhat curious person. Grison describes his play as not only first-rate, but as being frequently baffling from its unexpectedness."

"How can anything," asked Viola, "be unexpected to a master of Monsieur Grison's experience?"

"Well, I'll tell you as far as I can remember," said Everard, "exactly what Grison told me. It seems that not only is he a great student of the art of fence (and, as others have told me, of countless other subjects), but also he is, even for these days, a traveler of exceptionally wide experience. The two things combined have enabled him to acquire an intimate knowledge of all kinds of schools of fence. And this knowledge he mixes up in the most intricate manner, changing suddenly from the French to the Italian style and

*vice versa*, and mixing in with them queer movements, none of them to be called unfair, which he has picked up no one knows where. Furthermore he is ambidextrous, and will with lightning swiftness transfer his blade from one hand to the other indifferently. These things make him what Grison calls baffling."

"Of what nationality," asked Mrs. Torrens, "is this remarkable personage?"

"There," replied Knighton, "he is again baffling. No one has yet been able to answer that question. To quote, as best I can remember it, the immortal Pedro Carolino, 'He speak so much well French, Spanish, Italian, and English, that the Italians believe him Italian. He speak French as the Frenchies himselves. The Spanishmen believe him Spanishing, and the Englishes Englishman.'"

"And have you ever met him?" said Viola.

"Yes," Knighton made answer, "I have met him, but have not yet crossed blades with him."

"And did you like him?" asked Viola.

"Again," said Everard, "that is baffling. As to his being clever and amusing, there is no room for doubt. And he laid himself out to be agreeable. Yet—well—I can compare him best with absinthe—a liquor which I have drunk once or twice with amusement, but with which I have most carefully avoided any intimate acquaintance. That is just what I feel about this fellow."

"Do you know," said Mrs. Torrens, "I rather fancy I have met your man."

"Mamma dear," Viola interrupted, "Everard has not yet told us his name."

"For a very simple reason," Everard replied. "Although it is on the tip of my tongue, I can't remember it. It's something like——"

"Wait a moment," Mrs. Torrens interrupted. "Is he slight, tall, dark, with piercing eyes, a small moustache and a very remarkable smile?"

"Oh!" cried Viola with a pained accent, "I know of whom you are thinking."

"Well," Mrs. Torrens continued, "is it so?"

"It is, indeed, just so," said Everard, "and now his name comes back to me. He is, or calls himself, M. Manteuffel."

"I knew it," said Mrs. Torrens in a triumphant tone.

Viola simply repeated the name, almost under her breath, and gave a slight shudder.

This was not noticed by Knighton, who for once was looking not at her but at Mrs. Torrens, and he took up the talk again with, "And now the question is, am I to go anywhere with you, or will you come with me to Grison's?"

Mrs. Torrens looked at Viola, but, seeing no answer either way in her eyes, made instant reply herself, with, "My dear boy, I don't think we can find anything to amuse you and ourselves so much as going to Monsieur Grison's. Especially if you are going to join blades with this paragon, to whom I confess, on the only occasion when we met him I took no greater fancy than you did. But I take it he is singularly clever, although he talked very little."

"Ah! I noticed that too,' said Knighton. "And now I must warn you that they begin, I forget why, a good deal earlier than usual to-day, so that—"

"We had best put on our things," interrupted Mrs. Torrens. "Come, Viola!"

"In a moment, Mummy," answered the girl, as her mother walked in stately fashion out of the room.

Left alone with her Everard, she came up to him, put her hands on his shoulders and looked him straight in the eyes.

"Dearest," she said, "I wish you would not go to-day, or at least that you would not fence with this man."

"Why, little one," said Knighton in astonishment, "what strange fancy is this? Why should I not try conclusions with Manteuffel? I think it extremely likely that I shall carry off nothing from the encounter except "my shame and the odd hits, but still—"

"No, no!" cried Viola, "it is not that. I would rather see you win than lose, of course, but it is not that!"

"What is it then?" asked Knighton, remembering his own impression of the man, and exhibiting, it may be, something more of surprise than he really felt.

"Ah!" said Viola, drawing in a long breath, "I wish I could tell you—I wish I could tell myself. I cannot define it. All I know is that I have an instinctive dislike of that man—more than that, an instinctive terror of him. And you know woman's instinct is sometimes truer and clearer than man's reason."

"My darling," Knighton returned, "I don't deny that this

may often happen. Here, however, it can be but a fancy—one to which I know you would not seriously like me to give way. I would do anything for you, my best beloved, except——"

"Except appear to be an idiot because I am fanciful," broke in Viola, suddenly changing to a light and cheerful tone as she looked in his face; "and you are quite right. Yes, of course, you will go, and we will meet you there."

"So be it," rejoined Knighton; "I will walk down and order tea for you. Probably you will be there, driving, as soon as I am, unless you take an absolutely inexorable time in putting on your things."

"I shan't take very long," she said; "but stop a moment," she added, as she saw him preparing to start; "I got a little fairing for you yesterday, and I should like you to put it on, or rather, I should like to put it on you now."

With this she went to a miniature cabinet which stood on a table in a corner, and unlocking one of the drawers, took a jeweler's case and produced from it a little Venetian gold neck-chain, to which was attached a small and beautifully worked gold cross. This she threw caressingly and playfully over Everard's head, and he, nothing loth, adjusted the chain round his neck and let the cross fall inside his shirt.

"Now," said Viola in all seriousness, "remember you are never to take that off!"

"Never!" answered Knighton with equal seriousness.

Then followed an impassioned embrace, and then, being young lovers, they parted for three-quarters of an hour as if oceans were about to roll between them.

As things turned out, our Everard, walking quickly, thinking of many things and from time to time touching his newly-acquired collar of honorable servitude, arrived at the *salle d'armes* some little time before the ladies or any of the expected members and other guests. He and Grison exchanged greetings and then fell into conversation, employing as usual Grison's native tongue, which came as easily and trippingly to Knighton as it did to Grison himself. Knighton asked for any possible further information as to Manteuffel, and the Master answered after a pause, "Ah you are going to fence with him! Yes, of course you must, but I am sorry, for I do not think you will enjoy it much. No one can say that he does anything absolutely incorrect, yet he is not an agreeable opponent. As

for telling you anything more, I believe I have told you all I have been able to make out of him—his strange phrasing, his sudden changes of style, and his absolutely equal use of the right and left hand. There is, however, just one thing on which I should like to insist, though I have mentioned it to you before."

"And what is that?" asked Knighton, who half guessed what was coming.

"Well," said the Master, "I can, as you will see, give you no absolute reason for what I am going to say. But in my own mind I feel absolutely certain that ever since he first appeared here M. Manteuffel has been playing dark. Never, and I repeat I feel sure of it, has he put out his full resources either with me or with anyone else who has exchanged thrust and parry with him."

"I remember," said Knighton thoughtfully, "you did say something of that."

"Very well," Grison continued, "do you play the same game with him. Husband your resources—keep as even with him as you can, but on no account show your very best form until you are, as I feel sure you sooner or later will be, absolutely driven to it. Enough! The gallery begins to assemble; go and get on your fencing attire—and, above all, keep a cool head when you meet Manteuffel blade to blade."

As Knighton went up to the dressing-room, Mrs. Torrens, Viola, and several members bringing guests, male and female, entered the *salle*, and were shown to coigns of vantage for looking on by the ever courteous Monsieur Grison.

Knighton, as he began to change his swordsman's costume, felt, he knew not why, a touch of depression which gave place to a touch of crossness when, looking for his smart fencing suit of grey velvet cord, he found it not, and suddenly remembered that it had gone to his tailor for some slight repairs.

He was compelled then to be content with an ordinary suit of *coutil*, which he felt did not do sufficient honor to the presence of Viola and her mother. By the time that he was dressed and came down, the handsome and spacious hall was more than tolerably well filled with intending fencers and onlookers.

He went and paid his devoirs at once to his own guests,

saw that they had all they wanted in the way of tea, and then joined a knot of members and friends at one end of the hall.

Two or three asked him if he would have an assault with them, but his reply that he wanted to save himself, in case the queer stranger made the same request, was at once and naturally accepted as an excuse. His greatest intimate among them, Galt, offered to run through a few attacks and parries with him in the gallery by way of seeing that his hand was in order, and this offer he accepted.

A particularly interesting assault was in progress at the moment, and they waited for its end before going up to the gallery. When it came to the first of the last three hits, there was a very brilliant counter-parry and *riposte* which brought down applause, in which was included Everard's favorite exclamation, "May the devil admire me!" Hardly had the words passed his lips, when "Ah! perhaps he does," was uttered in a curiously melodious voice close to his ear. He gave an involuntary start at hearing the very words which Mrs. Torrens had used earlier in the afternoon, and, turning, perceived M. Manteuffel, who drew up alongside of him with his usual graceful and panther-like step, asked pardon in silvery accents for startling him, observing that he could not resist the temptation, and then, still with silken courtesy, inquired if Mr. Knighton would give him the honor and pleasure of an assault.

Everard of course assented, adding that he believed there would be a free space on the floor in about a quarter of an hour, and that he looked forward to being handsomely beaten, whereto the stranger answered by a charming gesture and smile of deprecation. Then Knighton went up to the gallery with Galt to get his hand in a little, and then they descended, Galt encouraging him and patting him on the back, to find that there would be room for the assault in another two or three minutes.

These Knighton employed in going to exchange a few words with Viola and Mrs. Torrens. "Wish me luck," he said gayly, for the very touch of the foil in his brief and carefully moderated bout with Galt had chased away his feeling of depression.

"I certainly do," said Mrs. Torrens, "though whether it might not be the best luck for you to find you have met your master is quite another question."

"Now, Mamma that is to be," answered Everard, "don't be so severe," and therewith turned to Viola, who wished him luck without any comment, and with a strangely earnest, even wistful expression on her face.

There was now clear space for an assault, and Knighton, observing it, advanced toward M. Manteuffel, who in his turn came out from the group at the end of the room to meet him half-way. The stranger answered closely enough to Mrs. Torrens's description of him already quoted. He was rather more than common tall—perhaps a very little under, or possibly over, six feet; a height enhanced by his black costume, with just an edging of a crimson scarf seen under the jacket. His face was of a natural pallor, set off by his small black upturned moustache, which left the finely cut lips plainly visible. These on occasion shaped themselves into a smile which seemed to justify Knighton's absinthe comparison, in that, while there was something undeniably attractive about it, yet it left behind it a very strange impression which was far from being completely pleasant. His voice, as has been said, was particularly musical, and in whatever language he spoke, he gave no sign of an accent foreign to the tongue he was using.

The coming assault between him and Knighton, who was among the two or three best, and indeed was said to be actually the best, of the great Grison's favorite pupils, had caused much attention and discussion among the other members of the *salle d'armes*. So much, indeed, that when he and Manteuffel took up their positions opposite to each other, they found that they had the whole floor to themselves, as the other fencers had by a common impulse joined the group of onlookers at the end of the room.

The stranger and the Englishman exchanged bows, and then Manteuffel said interrogatively, "The salute?" to which Knighton answered, "By all means," adding as a matter of course after each had deposited his mask and given the first sign of salutation, "À vous l'honneur!" Never perhaps was the very pretty ceremony, with its pleasant air of old-world courtesy, gone through with more spirit, correctness, and elegance. It drew more than a round of applause, to which Grison himself added a full-toned "Bravi! Très bien tous les deux!" It was not possible, however, for the spectators to judge from this anything more with regard to the coming

assault than that both men were in first-rate form and condition. Then, after another bow, they assumed their masks and the assault began, warily enough at first on each side. Presently, however, the interchange of feint, lunge, parry, counter-parry, *riposte* and all the rest grew quicker and quicker. They seemed evenly enough matched, and when they paused for a brief space at the end of a brilliant and lengthened phrase, while there had been nothing very decisive either way, it was thought by several of Knighton's friends that a slight advantage rested with him. This was not the view taken by Everard himself. On the contrary, as he stood, mask in hand and somewhat breathed, waiting for his adversary to begin again he said to himself, "How right Grison was! This fellow has not yet let himself go for anything like what he's worth."

Viola, with that woman's instinct of which she had spoken, aided by what she knew of the art of fence, had arrived at the same conclusion, and as Knighton sought her eyes he saw in them a look of mingled encouragement and warning which he at once understood. Then, turning just before he put on his mask to where Grison was, he saw a not dissimilar expression on the Master's face. Galt stood next to him, and from his look, which plainly said, "Capital! Go in and win!" Knighton derived a great if not highly reasonable solace. Not the less did he remember the advice which he thought the good, bright little Grison had meant to convey in his look, and when he and his adversary joined blades again he remained for a while on the defensive, showing much quickness and precision in parry and *riposte*. But Manteuffel was always in time to parry the *riposte* and send back one which Knighton in his turn just prevented from success.

All this time Knighton was conscious of a kind of dual personality such as many fine actors know. They, although so completely "in the skin" as the French say of the personages they represent that to the audience they seem to be those personages, are yet as quick as can be to pick up and cover up any slip in the stage business, to help in extinguishing any nascent fire on the stage, and the moment it is done to slip back into an identity separate from their own. In a not unlike way, one-half of Knighton's intelligence was taken up with wonder as to what he took to be Manteuffel's hidden resources, while the other half was keenly alert to forestall any of those devices as to which Grison had informed him. Thus, at a certain

moment, when he seemed to perceive as if by intuition an intention on his adversary's part of changing hands, he managed to draw an attack on the low line from Manteuffel, and then, parrying and riposting on the same line quicker than he had ever done in his life before, he planted on Manteuffel the cleanest and best hit which had yet been seen. The stranger's ready "*Touché*" was followed by applause for both combatants. Just before they raised their foils to come on guard again, Manteuffel said in his dulcet tones, "A thrust in segoon, as Sir Benjamin Backbite says. Very pretty, Mr. Knighton, very pretty; I make you my best compliments." When they resumed, the stranger, who seldom allowed Knighton's blade to rest on his own, pressed it for the fraction of a second, and then, with a disengagement of such rapidity as to amaze the spectators, planted his point exactly in that spot on Knighton's jacket which a master always likes to see his pupil attain. It was Everard's turn to cry "*Touché*" now and yet once again, for in the very next phrase the stranger achieved exactly the same result with a simple straight thrust, again of extraordinary swiftness. After the applause given to this brilliant stroke there was a pause during which the two fencers removed their masks, when the stranger addressed Knighton, who was now one point behind him, with, "How if we kept the last three for another weapon, the *épée*? What say you, Mr. Knighton?" By this time Knighton was worked up to a marked pitch of excitement, both physical and mental, and he replied, a little louder than was his wont, "By all means, whatever weapon you like—*épée*, sword and buckler, rapier and dagger, what you will."

"I think I prefer the *épée*," said Manteuffel with his curious smile, and the *famulus* went to fetch the practice duelling swords. While he was bringing them Knighton still in a state of exaltation, said to himself, but unconsciously loud enough to be heard by two or three people, including Viola and the stranger, "And may the devil fly away with me if I don't get two out of the three hits!" Manteuffel again smiled inscrutably, and said, "Have a care, Mr. Knighton; you might be taken at your word." Everard started at hearing Mrs. Torren's words thus repeated, but at that moment the *épées* were brought and the two fell on guard again. The first encounter was comparatively tame.

The stranger, indeed, made a very pretty show, but seemed

overborne by the mingled coolness and impetuosity of Knighton's attack, which ended by his touching Manteuffel on the forearm slightly, but enough to count for a hit. "One to you," said the adversary's silvery tones, and "He let me do that on purpose," thought Everard, who had by degrees completely recovered his self-control.

He foresaw, as no one else did except Viola, what would happen when they joined blades again. The stranger now attacked in earnest, and seldom or even never before had Monsieur Grison's *salle* seen so dazzling a display of swordsmanship. M. Manteuffel resorted to none of the tricks which Grison had described. It was all straightforward, feint, lunge, parry, *riposte*, until a brilliant phrase was ended by his point coming straight down on Knighton's foot. Had they been playing "sharps," it must have pinned him to the ground.

"One to you," said Knighton, and his voice came a little thick, doubtless from his being somewhat out of breath with trying to hold his own against that lightning blade. When they began again, Manteuffel, developing an entirely new plan of attack, succeeded in a shorter time than he had before occupied in hitting Knighton full on the fortunately wadded collar just below the leathern "beard" of the mask. "With sharps," said Galt, drawing in his breath, "that would have been a deuce of a business."

The interest was now intense. The stranger had scored two to one, and the next bout would either decide Knighton's fate or leave him yet one more chance. He felt again by some kind of intuition that the other intended to play with him, and so leave the ending to the arbitrament of the last hit. He was right. Manteuffel affected before he took up his weapon again to feel fatigue, and when the blades clinked together he exhibited, instead of the extraordinary swiftness and mastery he had before shown, a kind of tired perseverance which deceived a good many people, but which Knighton felt sure was intentional negligence.

So easy-going or so careless was he, indeed, that Knighton found time to cast one glance through his mask at Viola, and to observe that her lips were parted and her hands pressed together. The next moment he found himself trying without success to parry a lunge from the stranger. It was a quick lunge, though not quicker than Everard himself could have given, and there was plenty of force at the back of it.

But it was executed in a manner which was, for Manteuffel, so slovenly (Knighton still had the odd feeling of the slip being intentional) that the point, instead of fixing itself, slid across Knighton's breast, doing no more damage than to tear open the buttons of the *coutil* jacket (a vile material) and also of the thin flannel shirt underneath. The consequence of this was that the end of Viola's necklet with the little cross attached came full into view under the yet searching rays of a sun which was just beginning to decline, and which seemed to send its last assertion of supremacy down through the skylight. Knighton felt embarrassed, and was about repairing the disturbance of his attire when he was aware of a kind of commotion just opposite to him. He buttoned his jacket hastily and blindly awry, and, looking up, perceived M. Manteuffel leaning as if quite spent against the wall, with three or four members of the *salle d'armes* offering him help. His sword had dropped from his fingers, he had turned from his natural pallor to a hideous complexion, and he had all the air of a man on the point of fainting. In half a minute he had recovered sufficiently to move falteringly towards our Everard. "Pray forgive me, Mr. Knighton," he said in his most pleasing intonation, though the words came as if from far away. "I am subject to these attacks—at times; I fear I must break off our encounter now. Some other time perhaps—who knows?"

And with that it seemed as if he might have fallen back again, but that Galt with ready kindliness offered him an arm and conducted him up the winding stair to the dressing-rooms, where he "exhibited" a whiskey-and-soda, under the influence of which the stranger recovered himself enough to redouble his apologies for interrupting the assault, to express his hopes of coming again, and to depart with the same tacit air of mastery which was now familiar to the constant frequenters of Monsieur Grison's rooms. He sent for his traps next morning, but neither Grison's nor any other London resort has yet seen him again.

As for Knighton, already rather bewildered, he became yet more so, amid a torrent of mixed congratulations and condolences. Galt, when there was a lull, laid his hand on Everard's arm with a slight pressure and said, "I think I begin to understand—but all's right now," and so went up with him to the dressing-rooms. On the way they met the

very Grison, who most volubly explained that he was not sorry the assault had come to such an end. "I told you, did I not," he cried, "that fellow had more tricks up his sleeve than we any of us knew. He would have pinked you, sir, pinked you—and my favorite pupil would have been beaten by a no-one-knows-who from no-one-knows-where!"

Knighton dressed quickly and rather silently, and going straight down to Mrs. Torrens and Viola, accepted Mrs. Torrens's offer to drop him at his rooms and her invitation to dinner afterward. On the way Mrs. Torrens made one remark: "I told you, didn't I, that your M. Manteuffel" (it was curious how she handed over all claim of discovering him to Knighton) "was a monstrous clever fellow?"

Viola, who had never taken her eyes off Everard, also made one remark: "Dearest, I am so glad you put on that chain and cross."

Everard for his part said practically nothing as long as they drove together. After he had alighted at his own door, and as he was going upstairs to take a rest and dress for dinner, he said to himself: "Curious. But why the—I mean why on earth—should he have wanted to get hold of *me*?"

# THE Autobiography of a White Blackbird, by Alfred de Musset; Translated from the French by Laura Baldwin*

YES, I am very famous, but I find it most troublesome to be the only white blackbird in the world. I am by no means a fabulous bird, for the naturalist, Buffon, has described me in his book—but alas! I am extremely rare and most difficult to find. Would to heaven that I had been altogether impossible!

My father and my mother were two good people who lived for a number of years at the end of an old, quiet garden. Theirs was an exemplary household. Seated in a thick bush, my mother brought forth a little family regularly three times a year. At the same time my father, in spite of his great age, went out foraging every day and brought his wife beautiful insects which he seized delicately by the end of the tail, so that he would not disgust her. When a beautiful night came, he never failed to delight her with songs which made the whole neighborhood rejoice. There was never a quarrel nor a cloud to trouble their sweet union.

I had scarcely come into the world, however, when, for the first time in his life, my father showed a bad temper. Although I was as yet only a doubtful gray, he recognized in me neither the color nor the general appearance of any of his numerous posterity.

"What a dirty child!" he sometimes said as he looked askance at me—"now that boy has to go and poke into old plaster holes."

"Oh! my dear, my dear," my mother would call from the old porringer where she had her nest, "do you not see that it

*Translated from Short Stories.

is all due to his age? Were you not yourself a charming scapegrace in your youth? Just let our young blackbird grow and you shall see how beautiful he will be; he is one of the most promising of my children."

While thus defending me my mother did not deceive herself but, like all mothers, tried to apologize for her helpless child.

At the time of my first moulting my father seemed very thoughtful, and often looked at me with close attention. As soon as my feathers fell he again treated me kindly, and even gave me food when he saw me shivering in the corner; but when my poor chilled wings were again covering with down, he began to get so angry with each white feather that I was afraid my days were numbered. Alas! I had no mirror; I was ignorant of the cause of his wrath, and I asked myself why it was that the best of fathers could be so cruel.

One day a ray of sunlight and my growing feathers had made me joyful in spite of myself, and I flew into another tree where, to my misfortune, I began to sing. At the first note my father leaped through the air like a rocket.

"What did I hear?" he cried. "Does a blackbird whistle like that? Do I whistle like that? Is that whistling?"

Then, rushing to my mother in terrible anger, he cried, "Unfortunate woman! What kind of a creature is this son of yours?"

At these words, my indignant mother rushed from her nest; she tried to speak, but her sobs prevented her and, half fainting, she fell on the ground. I thought she was dying and, frightened and trembling, I threw myself at my father's knees.

"Oh, father," I cried, "if I whistle out of tune, and if I am badly dressed, surely my mother should not be punished for it. Is it her fault if Nature has refused me a voice like yours? Is it her fault if I have not your beautiful yellow beak and your handsome black suit which make you look like a church warden in the act of swallowing an omelet? If heaven has made me a monster, and if anyone should be punished for it, surely I am that unfortunate being and not my poor mother."

"That has nothing to do with it," said my father; "why did you whistle like that? Who showed you how to whistle thus against all custom and regulation?"

"Alas! sir,' I humbly answered "I just whistled as I

could because I felt good on this beautiful day, and because I had just enjoyed a fine dinner of flies."

"They never whistle that way in *my* family," answered he beside himself with rage. "For centuries we have whistled from father to son, and when I raise my voice in the night, all around open their windows to hear me. Isn't it enough that I must have before my eyes the frightful color of your silly feathers which make you look like a clown? If I were not the most peaceful of blackbirds, already I would have plucked those horrid feathers a hundred times."

"Oh, well!" I cried, revolted with the injustice of my parent, "if you felt that way, whatever kept you from it? I will get out of your presence. I wil deliver you from seeing that unfortunate white tail which makes you so unhappy. I will leave, sir; I will get out; you will have enough other children to console your old age; I will go far from you to conceal my misery, and perhaps," I added, sobbing, "I will find some corner of the earth where I can endure my sad life."

"As you wish," my father replied, as if he had paid little attention to this speech of mine; "only so I see no more of you. You are not my son; you are not a blackbird."

"And what am I then, sir, if you please?"

"I do not know, but you are not a blackbird."

With these dreadful words, my father slowly withdrew. My mother rose sadly, and went weeping to her nest. As for myself, confused and desolate, I took my departure the best way I could, and went sorrowfully to perch on the rainspout of a neighboring house

My father was inhuman enough to leave me in that mortifying situation for several days. In spite of his violence, though, he was good-natured, and his side glances showed me that he would soon be willing to pardon me and call me home. My mother, especially, often raised her eyes to my rainspout, and she continually called to me in a voice both plaintive and tender. My horrible white plumage, however, inspired in them, in spite of themselves, a repugnance and terror for which I saw there was no remedy.

"I am not a blackbird," I would repeat to myself over and over; and, in fact, when preening my feathers in the morning I could see only too clearly by the water in the gutter

that there was little resemblance between me and my family. "Oh Heaven!" I would say many times, "tell me then what I am!"

On a certain night when it was raining very hard, I was getting ready to go to sleep—worn out with hunger and grief. Suddenly I saw perched near me a bird that was wetter and more dreary looking than I should have believed possible. It was near my own color, as well as I could judge through the falling rain; but there were scarcely enough feathers on its body to clothe a sparrow, and it was larger than I. It seemed to me, at first glance, to be a very poor and needy bird, but he kept, in spite of the hard storm, an air of pride which charmed me. I modestly made him a stately bow, to which he responded with a taunt that almost threw me from the rain-spout. Seeing that I was scratching my ear and was preparing to make no further advances, he called out in a voice as hoarse as his head was bald:

"Who are you?"

"Alas! sir," I answered, fearing a second assault, "I do not know. I believed that I was a blackbird, but I have been convinced that I am not."

My singular reply and my air of sincerity interested him. He came near to me, and bade me tell my story. I complied with his request with all the sadness and all the humility which my situation demanded.

"If you were a pigeon like me," he said, after he had been listening awhile, "those experiences would not disturb you for a moment. We travel—that is our life. To cut the air, traverse space, see the mountains and plains at our feet, breathe the air of the sky and not the exhalations of earth, to fly like an arrow toward a fixed mark which we never miss—that, I say, is our pleasure and life. I can go farther in one day than a man can in ten."

"On my word, sir," I said, a little encouraged by this, "you must be a Bohemian bird."

"Oh, I never mind that. I have no country. I know only three things: my traveling, my wife and children. Where my wife is, that is my country."

"But what is that hanging around your neck? It looks like an old crumpled letter."

"Those are papers of importance," he answered, bridling up, "I am going to Brussels directly, and I am taking

to a celebrated banker some tidings which will make stocks drop with a rush."

"Merciful Heaven!" I cried, "your life is certainly a beautiful one, and Brussels, I am sure, must be a city well worth seeing. Can you not take me with you? Since I am not a blackbird, perhaps I am a carrier pigeon."

"If you were," he said, "you would have talked back when I first spoke to you."

"Oh well, sir, don't let us quarrel over such a little thing. See! The morning is coming, and the storm has disappeared. Be kind enough to let me follow you. I am lost, I have no one in the world; if you refuse, I have nothing to do but drown myself in this gutter."

"Oh well, come on! Follow me if you wish."

I cast a last glance toward the garden where my mother was sleeping. A tear dropped from my eyes, and the wind carried it away. I spread my wings and followed my new friend.

My wings, as I have said, were not very strong. While my guide went like the wind, I, at his side, was out of breath. I held out for some time, but soon I became so dizzy that I was sure I would fall.

"Is it very far from here?" I asked in a feeble voice.

"No," he answered, "we are at Bourget; we have only sixty leagues to go."

I tried to take courage, not wishing to seem like a wet blanket, and I kept on flying for a quarter of an hour, but, for the time, I was done up.

"Sir," I stammered again, "may we not stop a moment" I have a terrible thirst, and while we were perching on a tree—?

"Get out! You're only a blackbird!" the pigeon angrily replied.

Then, without deigning to turn his head, he continued on his travels. As for me, stunned and seeing nothing, I fell in a wheat field.

I do not know how long my swoon lasted. When I regained consciousness, the first thing returning to my memory was the last speech of the pigeon: "You're only a blackbird," he had said. Oh, my dear parents, I thought, then you were deceived. I am going to return to you. You will see that I am your own, true child, and you will give me my place in the good old nest in the porringer.

I made an effort to rise, but the fatigue of my trip and the pain resulting from my fall paralyzed my whole body. Scarcely had I risen to my feet when a fainting fit took me again and I fell on my side.

The terrible thought of death was already presenting itself to my mind when, through the blue-bottles and poppies, I saw two charming people walking toward me on tip-toes. The one was a little magpie, much speckled and very coquettish; the other was a turtle-dove of a beautiful rose color. The turtle-dove stopped at some distance from me with an air of modesty and compassion for my misfortune; but the magpie came up to me with the most agreeable bow in the world.

"Oh, my poor child, what are you doing there?" she asked me in a voice both silvery and playful.

"Alas! Your Highness," I answered (for I thought she could be no less than that), "I am a poor traveler whose guide has left him by the way, and I am about to die of hunger."

"Blessed Virgin! What are you saying?" she answered.

At once she began to fly here and there to the bushes which were around me—going and coming from one side to the other and bringing me a quantity of berries and fruits which she placed in a pile near me while she continued her questions.

"But who are you? Where do you come from? Your adventure seems almost impossible. Where are you going? You are too young to travel alone, for you have just had your first moulting. Who are your parents? Where are they? Why did they let you come away like this? Why, it is enough to make your hair stand on end."

While she was speaking I sat up a little, and began to eat the delicacies which she had provided. The turtle-dove remained quiet, always looking at me pitifully. However, she noticed that I turned my head very slowly, and she understood that I was thirsty.

A rain-drop still remained on a sprig of chickweed, and she timidly brought this to me in her beak. Surely I was very sick or such a reserved person would never have made this advance.

I did not know then whether I was in love or not, but my heart beat most violently. Divided between two different emotions, I felt an unexplainable pleasure. My purveyor

was so merry and my cupbearer was so sweet, that I would have wished to dine thus through all eternity. Unfortunately everything has its limit—even the appetite of a convalescent—and when I had finished eating and felt my strength returning, I satisfied the curiosity of the little magpie by telling her of my misfortunes. I did this with as much sincerity as I had shown the night before to the pigeon.

The magpie listened with much attention, and the turtledove gave charming proofs that she was deeply moved by the recital of my troubles. However, when I came to the leading cause of my misfortunes—that is, ignorance as to what I was—the magpie cried out:

"Are you joking? You, a blackbird! You, a pigeon! Oh, no! You are a magpie, my dear child, if there ever was one—and a very handsome one too," she added, giving me, as one would say, a tap with her fan.

"But, your Royal Highness," I answered, "it seems to me that I am not the color of a magpie, and not wishing to offend you"—

"A Russian magpie, my dear; you are a Russian magpie. Don't you know that they are white? Poor child, you are very innocent!"

"But, madame," I replied, "how can I be a Russian magpie when I was born in a garden at Marais?"

"Why, my dear child, you were born at the time of the invasion. Do you think there are no others like you? Trust to me and let me do what is best for you. I am going to take you at once to see the most beautiful things on earth."

"Where will they be, your Royal Highness?"

"In my green palace, my pretty one. There you will see what life is. When you have been a magpie for a quarter of an hour you will wish that you had never heard of anything else. Ours is an old family—we are all noble and come from royal stock. Not one of us has less than seven black marks and five white ones. It is true you have no black marks, but your Russian blood will admit you. Our whole life is made up of two things—gossiping and prinking. From sunrise to midday we prink; and from noon till evening we gossip. Our pride has no limit, and if, by chance, a jay or any other common bird is introduced among us, we have no pity on him, and fleece him unmercifully. In a word, our lives are made up of pleasures, honors, prattlings, glory and dress."

"That is all very beautiful, madame," I replied, "and certainly I should be very ill-bred if I did not obey the wishes of a person like you. But will your Highness permit me to say a word to the young lady here before I do myself the honor of following you? Mademoiselle," I continued, addressing the turtle-dove, "tell me frankly, I beg of you, do you think that I am truly a Russian magpie?"

At this question the turtle-dove lowered her head and turned very pale.

"Sir," she said, "I do not know if I can—"

"In the name of heaven speak, my lady! I do not wish to offend you—much to the contrary. You are both so charming that I want to offer my hand and heart to the one who wishes it, just as soon as I know if I am a magpie or something else; for, while looking at you," I added, speaking a little lower, "I feel something dove-like about myself."

"Well, in fact," said the turtle-dove, as she blushed a little, "it may be the reflection of the sunlight which falls on you through these flowers—but your plumage seems to me to have a very light tint——" she hesitated.

"Oh perplexity!" I cried. "How am I to know what I am? How can I give my heart to one of you when it is so cruelly torn? Oh Socrates! What an admirable precept (but how difficult to follow) you gave us when you said, 'Know thyself.' "

I had not tried my voice since the day when an unfortunate song made my father so angry. At this moment, however, the thought came to me that I should use it as a means to learn the truth. "Of course," I said to myself, "since my father turned me out of doors at the first couplet, I must see what effect the second will produce on these ladies."

Having commenced by bowing politely, as if to crave their indulgence, I first began to whistle, then to chirp, then, after a few trills, I sang at the top of my voice like a Spanish mule-driver. In proportion, as I sang the louder, the little magpie withdrew from me with an air of surprise which, passing to stupefaction, soon became a feeling of dread, accompanied by weariness. She described some circles around me like a cat around a piece of hot bacon which has just burnt her, but which she wishes to taste again. When I saw the effect of this trial, I sang myself hoarse to see her show more signs of impatience. She resisted my melodious efforts for twenty-

five minutes, but at last she could stand it no longer, and, with a great whir, she flew away to her beautiful green palace. As for the turtle-dove—well, from the very beginning of my song she was fast asleep.

"What an admirable effect harmony has!" I thought. "Oh Marais! Oh maternal nest! More than ever I would return to you!"

At the moment when I was preparing to depart, the turtle-dove opened her eyes.

"Farewell," she said, "stranger so sweet and so tiresome. My name is Gourouli; do not forget me."

"Beautiful Gourouli," I answered, "you are good, sweet, and charming; would that I could live and die for you. But you are the color of the rose and so much happiness is not for me."

I did not allow the sad effect produced by my singing to grieve me. "Alas, music! Alas, poetry!" I repeated to myself as I returned to Paris, "how few hearts there are which can appreciate you!"

While I was making these reflections I knocked my head against that of a bird who was flying in the opposite direction. The shock was so great and so unforeseen that we both fell on the top of a tree, which, by good luck, was standing there. After we had shaken ourselves a little, I looked at the newcomer expecting a quarrel on the spot. I saw with surprise that he was white. In truth, his head was a little larger than mine and on the front was a bunch of plumage which gave him a half-heroic, half-comic appearance. Besides, he carried his tail high in the air; but he did not seem disposed to give battle. We accosted each other very civilly and made our mutual excuses, after which we entered into conversation. I took the liberty of asking his name and country.

"I am astonished that you do not know me," he said. "Aren't you one of us?"

"In truth, sir, I do not know who I am," I answered. "Everybody asks me and everybody tells me the same thing. There must be a wager up about it."

"You make me laugh," he replied. "Your plumage fits you too well for me to fail to recognize a colleague. Without doubt you belong to that race, illustrious and ancient, which, in Latin, is called '*cacuata*,' in the learned tongue, 'kakatoes, and in the vulgar jargon, 'cockatoo.' "

"My faith, sir, that is very probable, and that would be a great honor for me. But will you not deign to tell me to whom I have the honor of speaking?"

"I am the great poet Kacatogan," the unknown answered. "I have made some wonderful trips and I have had hard traveling. I am not inexperienced in verse-making, and my muse has had some hard luck. I have hummed under Louis XVI, sir, I have bawled for the republic, I have sung nobly for the empire, I have discreetly praised the Restoration; I have even made an effort at the present time to submit myself (not without trouble) to the necessities of this tasteless century. In a word, I can flatter myself, that I have added some graceful garlands to the temple of the Muses. Why! I have grown old in the work, but I still rhyme vigorously, and, just as you saw me, I was revising a poem and a song which would have been at least six pages long. However, if I can do anything for you, I am entirely at your service."

"Truly, sir, you can be of great service to me," I replied, "for at this moment I am in great poetical embarrassment. I do not dare say that I am a poet, especially to a great poet like you," I added, bowing to him, "but Nature has granted me this gift and I must not refuse it. To tell you the truth, though, I am absolutely ignorant of the rules of rhyming."

"I have forgotten them," said Kacatogan, "and so do not let that trouble you."

"But a sorrowful thought comes to me," I replied, "and it is this: My voice has the same effect upon those who hear it as the words of—— You know what I want to say, do you not, sir?"

"Yes, I know," said Kacatogan. "I know what that effect is. The cause is not known, but the effect is incontestable."

"But you, sir, who seem to be the Father of Poetry, you must know a remedy for this inconvenient pain."

"No," said Kacatogan, "for my part I have never been able to find it."

"You must agree with me, sir, that it is very hard for a well-intentioned person to put people to flight when he has only been acting from a good impulse. Do you wish to continue your kindness by listening to me and giving me your sincere advice?"

"I am very willing," Kacatogan kindly answered. "I am all ears."

I began to sing at once, and I had the satisfaction of seeing that Kacatogan neither flew away nor went to sleep. He looked at me constantly, and, from time to time, he bent his head with an air of approbation; but I soon saw that he was composing a poem and that he did not hear me at all. Profiting by a moment when I was taking breath, he interrupted me by saying—

"I have found that rhyme. It is the sixty thousand seven hundred and fourteenth poem which my wonderful brain has produced—and they dare to say that I am old. I am going to read it to my good friends, and we will then see what they have to say."

So speaking, he took flight and disappeared—never seeming to remember that he had met me.

Lonely and disappointed, I had nothing better to do than to use the rest of the day in traveling full speed toward Paris. Unfortunately, I did not know the way. My journey with the pigeon had been too little agreeable for me to have any idea of directions. The result was, that, instead of turning to the right at Bourget, I went to the left, and, surprised by night, was obliged to seek a shelter in the woods at Morfontaine.

They were all retiring when I arrived. The magpie and the jays, who are the most ill-natured people (as every one knows) were quarreling among themselves. The sparrows were fighting each other. Birds of all kind were in that wood. From all sides their voices could be distinctly heard as they called: "Come, my wife. Come, daughter! Here I am, my dear. This way, darling. Good-night, friends.—Sleep well, children."

What a situation for a bachelor—to sleep in such an inn. I was tempted to join some birds of my own age and ask hospitality of them. In the night all birds are gray and it cannot be wrong to sleep near them quietly.

I first went to a trench where some starlings had gathered. They were making their evening toilet with much care, and I noticed that the greater part had gilded wings and varnished feet—they were the dandies of the forest. However, they flattered each other so outrageously that it

was impossible for me, a modest and retired bird, to remain there very long. I next went to perch on the branch of a tree where a half-dozen different varieties of birds had alighted. I modestly took the last place on the branch, hoping that I would be allowed there in peace. Alas! An old dove was next to me, and soon she hit me with a strength which would have done honor to a porter. I fell among the heather where a large hen was sleeping. My mother, herself, in her old nest in the porringer, could not have been a more welcome sight. I certainly thought that I could rest near her, for she would not awake. I was mistaken again, for she half opened her eyes and drowsily said—

"You are cramping me, little one, go away."

At that moment I heard someone call me. They were thrushes, who motioned me to come to them. "Here are some good friends at last," I thought. Laughing like crazy people, they made a place for me, and I crowded among them like a love-letter in a muff. I did not stop to think that these ladies had eaten more grapes than was good for them. They could scarcely keep in their places, and their jokes, laughter, and songs drove me away from them.

I had begun to despair and was going to sleep in a lone corner when a nightingale began to sing. All were silent at once. How pure its voice was—even its melancholy tones were sweet! Far from troubling the sleep of others, its chords seemed to soothe them. No one thought of trying to silence it—no one complained because it sang at that hour—its father did not abuse it—friends did not take flight.

"I am the only one then," I cried to myself, "who is prevented from enjoying life. Let me go, let me leave this cruel place. It would be better to find my way in the dark at the risk of being swallowed by an owl—yes, that is better than to suffer from the sight of others' happiness."

With this thought I started out and went a long way at random. When the day broke, I saw the towers of Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris. In the twinkling of an eye I was looking up and down for our garden. At last I saw it and flew toward it like a flash of lightning. Alas! It was empty. In vain I called my parents: no one replied. The tree where my father stayed, my mother's bush, the dear porringer—all had disappeared. The axe had destroyed everything. Noth-

ing remained but a hundred old sticks in the place of the green walk which I proudly owned as my birth-place.

At first I searched for my parents in all of the neighboring gardens, but this was needless trouble. Without doubt they had sought refuge in some distant place, and I could never hear anything more of them.

Overcome with my great trouble, I went to perch on the rain-spout where my father's anger had first driven me. I passed days and nights there in deploring my sad existence. I could not sleep. I scarcely ate anything. I almost died from my terrible grief.

One day I was lamenting as usual—"So then," I said aloud, "I am not a blackbird, because my father could not own me; nor a pigeon, because I fell by the wayside while on the way to Belgium; nor a Russian magpie, because the little lady stopped her ears when I opened my mouth; nor a turtle-dove, since Gourouli, the beautiful Gourouli, herself, snored like a monk when I sang; nor a parrot. since Kacatogan did not deign to listen to me—finally, I was not any bird at all, so far as I could see. Still I had feathers on my body, and here were wings and claws. I could not be a monster, or Gourouli and the little magpie would not have done so much for me. By what inexplicable mystery should it be impossible for these feathers, wings, and claws to form a whole to which a name could be given? Could I not by chance—."

I was going to continue my complaints, but I was interrupted by two porters who were disputing in the street.

"Oh, come off!" one said to the other, "if you ever bring that about I will make you a present of a white blackbird."

"Merciful Father!" I cried, "this concerns me. I am the son of a blackbird, and I am white. Therefore, I am a white blackbird."

This discovery, I must confess, modified my thoughts greatly. Instead of continuing my complaint, I began to feel conceited and to walk proudly along the rain-spout—looking around me with a proud and victorious manner.

It is something great, I told myself, to be a white blackbird—that is something which is not seen every day. I was silly to be troubled because I could find no one like myself. Why! That is the fate of a genius—therefore it is my fate. I wished to leave this world—now I am going to astonish it. Since the common herd do not even know of my existence,

I am going to pretend to be like the Phenix (who was the only one of his kind in mythology), and then I shall scorn all other birds. I must buy the memoirs of some of our great writers and the poems of the English authors—that will surely add to the little pride which the good God has given me. Yes, I shall add, if possible, to the prestige given me by my birth. Nature has made me a *rara avis;* I shall make myself a mysterious one. It will be counted a great honor and favor even to see me—and, I added to myself, perhaps I can become a man of wealth just by showing myself.

No! That was an unworthy thought! I shall write a poem like Kacatogan—not a short song, but a work which will take up twenty-four pages, like all great men have done; if that is not enough, I shall have forty-eight pages with notes and an appendix. Everyone must know that I exist. In my writings I shall never fail to deplore my loneliness and isolation. I shall write so that even those most happy shall envy me. Since heaven has refused me a wife, I shall tell funny stories about other people's mates. I shall prove that everything is green excepting alone the grapes which I eat. The nightingales had better look out; just as two and two make four I shall prove that their songs are bad for the heart, and that their work is worth nothing. I must look up the best publisher for, first of all, I must make a fine entry into literature. Then I intend to have around me a composing corps of assistants—not journalists alone, but true authors and even women of letters. I shall write a play for the most celebrated actress, and if she refuses to take the part I shall publish abroad that her talent was not equal to it. I shall go to Venice. In the midst of that enchanted city I shall hire the grandest palace which I can get. In my solitude I shall send out works which will make my old friends—the pigeon, magpie and turtle-dove—turn green with rage and envy. As far as I myself am concerned, I shall prove to all that I am inaccessible to love. In vain will they urge me and beg me to have pity on the unfortunate ones whom my sublime poems have enchanted. To them all I shall say "Bah!" Oh, how famous I shall be! My manuscripts will sell for their weight in gold. My books will cross the sea. Renown and fortune will follow me wherever I go. Alone I shall be indifferent to the murmurs of the crowd around me. In a word, I intend to be a perfect white blackbird, a truly eccentric writer, fêted,

admired and envied—but, above all, an insupportable grumbler, like those who have gone before me.

It did not take me any more than six weeks to publish my first work. As I planned, it was made up of forty-eight pages, each containing a canto or poem in itself. There was probably some slight carelessness in it, but that was due to the wonderful rapidity with which I had written it. However, I thought that the public of this day would not find any fault with it.

My success was worthy of myself—that is to say, it was unparalleled. The subject of my work was no other than its author—myself. In this I conformed to the custom of the day. I described all of my past sufferings with a charming conceit; I put before the reader a thousand domestic details which were exceedingly interesting. The description of the porringer where my mother had her nest filled not less than fourteen pages; here I gave a careful account of all the grooves, holes, knots, splinters, nails, blemishes, different colors and reflections; I showed the outside, inside, top, bottom, sides, inclined planes and straight pieces; passing to the contents, I made a study of the blades of grass, straws, dried leaves, splinters of wood, drops of water—in fact, of everything that could possibly be there. Oh! It was a charming description! However, you must not think that I put all this in at once; some impertinent readers might have skipped that part of it. I skilfully cut this up and inserted it all through the story, so that nothing was omitted; in fact, at the most interesting and dramatic part, you could always look for four or five pages of porringer. That, I believe, is one of the great secrets of the art and, as I am not selfish, anyone who wishes it may profit by this advice.

All Europe was deeply moved when my book appeared; it literally devoured all of the revelations which I had deigned to communicate. How could it have been otherwise? I not only told everything which had happened to me—but also gave the public all the idle dreams which had gone through my head from the time when I was two months of age. Besides that, I did not fail to treat the subject which was occupying everyone's attention at the time—the future of the human race. This problem seemed interesting to me, and

so, in a moment of leisure, I sketched a solution which seemed to give general satisfaction.

Every day I received compliments in rhyme, letters of congratulation and declarations of anonymous love. As to visitors, though, I did not depart from the rule which I had planned, my door was closed to all. I could not, however, refuse to see two strangers who were announced as coming from my parents. One was a blackbird from Africa; the other a blackbird from China.

"Oh, my dear sir!" they said, as they embraced me, "what a great blackbird you are! How well you have painted the sufferings of genius in your sublime poem! How we sympathize with your griefs, with your noble scorn of the common herd! We also know for ourselves those secret pains about which you sing! Here are two sonnets which we have written, one with the other. We beg and pray that you will accept them."

"Beside that," continued the Chinese bird, "here is some music which my wife composed for a passage in your preface. She admirably interprets the thought of the author."

"Gentlemen," I told them, "as well as I can judge, you seem to me to be endowed with heavy hearts and light minds. But pardon me for asking you a question. Why do you say you are sad?"

"Oh, my dear," answered the traveler from Africa, "just look how I am built. My plumage, it is true, is agreeable to the eye, and my color is a beautiful green; but my beak is too short and my feet are too large, and see what a tail I am decked with. The length of my body does not equal two-thirds that of my tail. Isn't that enough to drive one to distraction?"

"And I, sir," said the other, "have a worse misfortune than my friend's. His tail sweeps the street, but the children point their fingers at me because I have none at all."

"Gentlemen," I replied, "I pity you with all my heart. Permit me to tell you, however, that there are many stuffed birds in the Zoölogical Garden which resemble both of you very closely. I am the only one of my kind, and it is my misfortune; I may be wrong, but that is my privilege, you know. I am white, gentlemen; when you are like I am—then, and then only, let me hear what you have to say."

However I was unhappy in spite of the resolution which

I had made, and the calmness which I had affected. My solitude, for all its glory, seemed none the less painful, and I could only think with horror of my entire life passed as a bachelor. The return of spring, especially, gave me mortal pain, and I was fast passing into a decline when an entirely unforeseen circumstance changed my whole life.

It goes without saying that my writings had crossed the Channel, and that the English were criticising them severely. The English criticise everything—except the few things they understand. One day I received from London a letter which was signed by a young lady blackbird.

"I have read your sublime poem," she wrote, "and the admiration which I feel has made me resolve to offer you my hand and my heart. God has created us for each other. I am just like you, for I, too, am a white blackbird."

My surprise and joy, may be imagined. A white female blackbird! Can it be possible? Then I am not the only one on earth. I hastened to answer the letter of the unknown, and I did this in a manner which showed how much her proposition pleased me. I begged her to come to Paris at once, or to allow me to fly to her. She replied that she would prefer to come to me, for her parents might object if the plans were known. She was even then arranging her affairs, and would soon be with me.

She came in a few days afterward, and oh! she was the most beautiful woman in the world—and she was even whiter than I myself.

"Oh, mademoiselle!" I cried, "or rather madame (for from this minute I regard you as my own beloved wife), can it be possible that earth held such a charming creature without my knowledge of it? Blessed be my misfortunes and punishments since heaven has kept such an unexpected blessing for me. Until this moment I believed that I was condemned to an eternal solitude, and, to tell you frankly—it was a heavy burden to bear. Please accept my hand without delay; let us be married in the English way, without ceremony, and then let us fly together to Switzerland."

"That is not my idea at all," the young blackbird answered. "I want to have a grand wedding, and all the blackbirds in France who are at all well-born must be bidden to the celebration. People who are as celebrated as we are should not be married like common cats. I have brought plenty of

money with me. Send the invitations; go to the caterer's and decorator's, and do not spare any expense for the refreshments."

I obeyed her commands, as all lovers should do. Our nuptials were magnificent; the guests ate ten thousand flies. We received the benediction of Father Cormorant, who was the archbishop. A superb ball made a fitting close to the day—at least there was nothing lacking for my happiness.

The more I searched into the character of my charming wife—the more my love for her increased. She united all the attractions of soul and mind and body in her little person. She was just a little bit affected, but I attributed this to the influence of those English fogs in which she had always lived, and I did not doubt that the beautiful climate of France would soon drive this small cloud away.

One little thing disturbed me. That was the mysterious way in which she locked herself and her maid in her room, passing hours there, which were devoted to her toilet—or at least, that is what she said. Husbands don't like such whims in their households. Twenty times I knocked at my wife's door, but she would not let me in. That made me very impatient, and one day I insisted with such bad humor that she was obliged to yield. I noticed on entering that she had a large bottle full of a kind of paste made of flour and a sort of Spanish white chalk. I asked my wife what she was doing with that stuff; she answered that it was an opiate for her chilblains.

This opiate seemed pretty thick; but how could I doubt this wise, beautiful woman who had given herself to me with so much enthusiasm and such perfect sincerity?

At first I did not know that my wife was a literary woman; she confessed it to me some time after we were married, and she even went so far as to show me a romance which she had written in the manner of Walter Scott. I now saw that my wife was not only the most beautiful woman ever created—she was also intelligent enough to be worthy of the position of companion to a genius.

From that time we always worked together. While I was composing my poems, she was scribbling whole reams of paper. She wrote her novels with an ease equal to mine. She always chose the most dramatic subjects—suicides, murders, burglaries and even pickpocket adventures—and

never failed, in passing, to attack the government, and to preach the emancipation of woman. In a word, each effort added to her ability; she never had to erase a line nor to make a plan before she began to write. She was a perfect type of a literary woman.

One day she was working unusually hard, and I saw that she was perspiring freely. At the same time I saw a large black spot on her back.

"Oh heavens!" I said to her. "What is the matter? Are you sick?"

At first she seemed greatly frightened; but the usual self-possession of a woman of the world came to her aid, and she told me that it was a drop of ink, and that she was subject to it at times of deep thought and inspiration.

"Is my wife's color running?" I said to myself. This thought kept sleep from my worried eyes and brain. The bottle of paste kept returning to my memory. Oh, what a cruel suspicion! Is this heavenly creature only painted? Is she varnished just to take me in? Am I then married only to some flour when I think that I am pressing to my heart the sister of my soul—the being created for me alone?

Pursued by this horrible doubt, I formed a plan to rid myself of it. I purchased a barometer, and waited eagerly for a rainy day. I wanted to take my wife out in the country on some cloudy Sunday and try the experiment of a thorough soaking. But we were in the middle of July, and the weather was unusually pleasant.

Artless as I was, this trouble came very heavy upon me, and I often wept as I worked. One night I decided to have a long talk with my wife.

"My darling," I said, "do you know how dearly I love you? Without you, my life would be a sad dream—with you, it is heaven on earth. I can never tell you how much your beauty inspires me in my wonderful work. Before you came my solitude was that of an exiled orphan—now it is that of a king. Do you understand, my angel, my beautiful one, that there is no room in my heart for anyone but you? No one ever loved before as I love you."

While raving in this way, I wept on my wife's neck, and I noticed that she lost color rapidly. As each tear fell from my eyes, I noticed that there appeared a feather which was not even black, but a bright red. After some minutes of

tenderness, I found myself face to face with one of the most common and ordinary birds I ever saw.

What should I do? What should I say? What part should I take? If I wished, I might consider our marriage void and have a divorce with no trouble. But how could I publish my shame? Had I not had enough trouble? I summoned all my courage and resolved to quit this country, to abandon the career of letters, to flee to the desert, if possible, and avoid the sight of every living creature. I would seek a retired place where one might be free if he was a white blackbird.

And so I fled away, weeping as I went. The wind carried me to the woods of Morfontaine, where I found everyone in bed. The nightingale was singing again, and he seemed so gay and happy that I could not resist the temptation of speaking to him.

"Why are you so happy?" I said. "You not only sing very well, and just when you wish, but you also have a wife and children, your nest and friends galore. I, too, have sung, but not like you. My fame has spread abroad as a man of letters, while you were hid away in these woods—but you are happier than I. Won't you tell me your secret of happiness?"

"Yes," answered the nightingale, "but it is not what you think. My wife wearies me; I do not love her. I am in love with the rose. I cry myself hoarse for her every night, but she sleeps and does not hear me. To-morrow morning, when I go to my rest, worn out with suffering and grief—then it is that she is awake and ready to bloom for a bee, who will only eat her heart. Such is life."

"Yes, such is life," I said, "and maybe I am not the only one who suffers in this world."

# Anecdotes.

IN this department a first prize of $5.00 in gold, and second and third prizes of an annual subscription to Short Stories each, will be given for the best, the second and the third best original or selected anecdotes sent in before the 1st day of the month following the date of this issue, No other compensation is made for matter used in this department. **The sources from which all selected or reprinted anecdotes have been taken must be clearly stated. The Editor cannot return contributions or correspond about them. If the story is valuable keep a copy of it.** Address "Anecdotes," care The Current Literature Publishing Co., 34 West 26th Street, New York.

## The "Intintion."

Jerry O'Rafferty came from the north of Ireland. During all his life there and later in Chicago, he had never been inside a Catholic Church.

He was something of a scoffer at religious ceremonies, although he knew little about them. His good friend, Michael O'Brien, was troubled at this, and always used his influence to get Jerry into the church. At last he was successful. Jerry grudgingly consented to go to church Easter Sunday because of the importance of the occasion.

The two sat together, Jerry an interested spectator, while Mike entered into the services like the devout man he was.

Jerry was soon evidently impressed by the splendor of his surroundings and the grandeur of the services. He watched the lighting of the candles and listened attentively to the glorious burst of Easter music. Then he could refrain from commenting no longer.

"Mike," he whispered, leaning over to his companion, "this bates h—l."

"Whist," replied Mike, in a loud whisper, "sich is the intintion."—Selected from the Chicago Times-Herald by W. S. Pratt.

## About Washington.

An Englishman was being shown the sights along the Potomac. "Here," remarked the American, "is where George Washington threw a dollar across the river."

'Well," replied the Englishman, "that is not very remarkable, for a dollar went much further in those days than it does now."

The American would not be worsted, so, after a short pause, he said: "But Washington accomplished a greater feat than that. He once chucked a sovereign across the Atlantic."—Selected from the Boston Brown Book by Minetta J. Kenner.

## A Very Bad Sparrow.

In Boston I picked up a bit of local history which was more enjoyable than even the baked beans and the spiral streets.

When Phillips Brooks was rector of Trinity Church, one of his parishioners went to him in great perturbation, because her little girl, only five or six years old, had learned to use the worst language conceivable, and the mother could not break up the practice. Would the eminent clergyman try?

He advised that Maud be left at home at a certain hour of a certain day, with none but the servants present, so that when he called, she would feel the full weight of a hostess' responsibility.

At the time agreed upon, he called. Maud was enthusiastic at being so honored when mamma and all were out. She chatted volubly about everything connected with church and Sunday-school interests.

Presently a newsboy passed under the window, telling all sorts of lies about what wasn't in his papers. Mr. Brooks

said, "Maud, dear, do you know it always makes me feel bad when I see those little street gamins—the newsboys, the boot-blacks, and such little people?"

"Why, Mr. Brooks? What makes you feel bad when you see them?"

"Oh, they use such bad language! Such very, very bad and shocking language!"

"Do they?" Maud seemed duly and sufficiently impressed. She regretted the conditions described, exceedingly.

"But that isn't the worst thing that I know," said Mr. Brooks; "these boys are in a measure excusable. They don't know any better, many of them. They have no nice homes and refined mothers and fathers to teach them the right way. There are children, however, who have all of these advantages and yet use shocking language. Maud, do you know that there is a little girl—a little girl, mind you—right in Trinity Church and Sunday-school, who uses bad language—actually swears, Maud! Oh, dear! Isn't it dreadful?"

Maud looked him squarely in the eyes and without a tremor, said: "Phillips Brooks, who told you that I sweared?"

"Well, Maud, to tell the truth, a little bird told me."

"Oh, yes!" said Maud, "I know all about it now; I couldn't have expected anything else. It was one of those d——d English sparrows."—Selected from the Gentleman's Magazine by W. B. Hanson, Kansas City, Mo.

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(In accordance with our offer the first prize of $5 in gold, and the second and third prizes of subscriptions to SHORT STORIES for one year, have been awarded respectively to W. S. Pratt, 1590 Lincoln Ave., Chicago, Ill.; Minetta J Kenner, 961 Summit Ave., Jersey City, N. J.; and W. B. Hanson, 507 Montgall Ave., Kansas City, Mo., for the foregoing three best anecdotes submitted before May 1st.)

## Buoys Will be Buoys.

A Boston lawyer had been having trouble with the small boy who came every week from the tailor's to take his trousers to be pressed. One day his clothes came back as wet as if they had been dropped in a puddle. The lawyer wrote his tailor briefly: "Next time send a life-boat. The breeches boy isn't safe."—Selected from the Youth's Companion by Wm. T. Miller.

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## Unconscious Irony.

It was on the eve of the Spanish-American war. We had been discussing the probabilities of the situation with more or less eloquence, and all those present, with one exception, thought that war was close at hand. The exception had argued little, but finally he said in a confident tone: "There will be no war between Spain and the United States. Because if the United States declares war, the foreign powers will meditate."

Another specimen was overheard on the street-car:

Visitor—"Say, I hear people talking so much about Madison Square Garden. What is this garden anyhow?"

Native—"Oh, that's the place you go to in the evening and take your finance with you."—Daniel M. B., Buffalo, N. Y.

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## A Bishop's Meek Retort.

Bishop Blomfield, of London, was once asked to preside at a meeting of the debating society of a certain theological college, where the students were all young men deadly in earnest. One of these gentlemen in the course of the debate, with strong indignation evident in his voice, addressing the chair, inquired oratorically:

"What, sir, would the apostle Paul have said, could he have seen the life of luxury led by our present race of prelates and church dignitaries, riding

about in their carriages and living in their palaces? What, sir, I repeat, would he have said?"

"I think," said the Bishop, interrupting the speaker in a meek and mild voice, "that he would have said: 'Things in the church must be looking up!' "—Selected from the St. James Gazette by Ralph A. Lyon.

## Embarrassing.

It is embarrassing to meet an acquaintance whose name has malignantly cut loose from your memory. A well-known comedian once had an experience of this kind on shipboard.

"On the first day out," he said, "as I came on deck I saw a man whose face was familiar, but I could not remember his name. I saw he had recognized me, and, to avoid the awkwardness of failing to call him by name, I kept out of his way and pretended not to have seen him.

"Every time I took the other side of the deck he followed and I was kept dodging so constantly that on the third day it occurred to me to look over the passenger list, in the hope that I might recognize the name that fitted my unknown friend. I read the list, but failed to find a familiar one.

"I kept trying to avoid the man, and felt most uncomfortable till a brilliant idea struck me. I would put the passenger list in my pocket, go boldly up to him, shake hands, and before he had time to open the conversation I would bring out the list and say, 'They have omitted your name from the passenger list.' Of course, he would say, 'Oh, no; there it is, and point it out.

"I did this. I went up to him boldly and grasped his hand.

"'Why,' said he, reproachfully, 'I thought you were going to cut me.'

"'Oh, dear, no,' said I. 'I thought you didn't remember me. By the way, they have omitted your name from the passenger list.'

"He looked at the list a minute or so.

"'Yes,' said he, 'so they have.'"—Selected from Tit Bits by E. L. Bostwick.

## Awaiting a Mistake.

At an East Side kindergarten a few days ago a visitor gave a silver dollar to a bright little boy.

"Now," she said, "what are you going to do with it?"

"I'll have it changed into halves," said the boy, without a moment's hesitation.

"And then?" asked the questioner.

"I'll get dimes, and then nickels, and then pennies."

"What will you do then?" asked the visitor, smiling.

"I'll get nickels," said the boy.

"But why will you get nickels when you have already had them?"

"Huh," answered the bright youth, "somebody may make a mistake in change. And it won't be me."—Selected from the New York Sun by H. Levy.

## A Definition of "Average."

The Bishop of Hereford was examining a school-class the other day, and among other things asked what an average was. Several boys pleaded ignorance, but one at last replied: "It is what a hen lays on." The answer puzzled the Bishop not a little, but the boy persisted in it, stating he had read it in his little book of facts. He was then told to bring his little book, and on doing so he pointed triumphantly to a paragraph commencing: "The domestic hen lays on an average fifty eggs each year."—Selected from McClure's Anecdotes by Nathan Wise.

## "Doxology—Benediction."

The ladies of the Welden Missionary Society were having an especial program—a very special one—for there were in attendance several ladies from neighboring congregations and the local

society was exerting itself to excel all previous meetings. The president was noticeably nervous. All went well, however, and several responsible ones were beginning to breathe freely again.

The president rose to announce the last song. The dignity and responsibility of her position lay heavy upon her, and perhaps the pleasing prospect of speedy release from the strain excited her; or was it the many watchful, critical eyes upon her waiting for some parliamentary blunders? Whatever the cause, the effect was a laughable blunder.

"We will now sing the benediction, after which Brother Reed will pronounce the doxology."

She seated herself and waited expectantly. Not a leaf turned; no sound from the organ. Thinking she had not been heard or understood, she rose and repeated:

"Let us now sing the benediction, after which Brother Reed will pronounce the doxology."

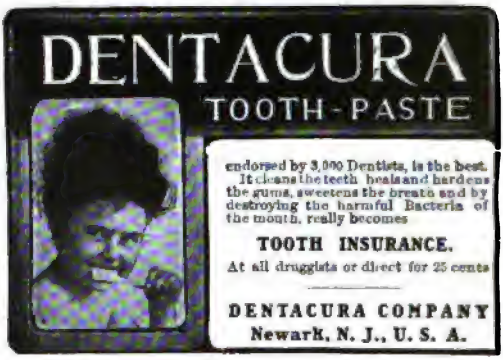
Several suppressed titters were heard. Brother Reed, a large fleshy man, keenly alive to jokes, was in a state of internal convulsions. The organist held her open book and stared in frightened bewilderment. Glancing toward her, Madame President realized something was wrong, just what, she could not for the life of her tell. In desperation she rose once more, and in tones which trembled in spite of their attempted severity, she said for the third time:

"Let us rise and sing the benediction."

The organist righted herself, and at a venture, pealed forth the opening bars of "Praise God from whom all blessings flow."

The singing ended, the president turned to the minister and said impressively:

"Brother Reed, will you now pronounce the doxology?" With an effort the good man controlled his face and voice and pronounced the benediction. —L. M. KNIGHT, Hobart, Okla.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He was a young dominie, had not long been ordained to the pulpit, but he intended to make his mark as a man of the cloth, and he preached sermons which were full of fire, vigor, wit and satire.

One night when he knew the Bishop was present, he was making an especially strong effort to be dramatic and forceful. His sermon was on the well-worn theme of the storm-tossed mariner, but he was giving it new life, new pictures and ideas.

"Imagine, friends," he said, "that this fragile ship, this thing of wood and iron, had sailed from harbor on a clear bright day with every assurance of a peaceful, speedy voyage. As she traverses the deep the wind freshens and soon she is buffeted by storms. With increased wind comes a rising sea and the ship finds herself plowing over mountains of green water amid swirling torrents of foam in the teeth of the gale which every moment is growing in intensity. She cannot run to port. It is a thousand miles to the nearest land, a thousand miles to harbor light, and there, on the bosom of the raging main, with five miles of water beneath her keel, the tempest-tossed boat lunges and rolls, making no progress, becoming battered and storm-beaten, a mere plaything of the elements.

"In that extremity, in that terrible peril, what would she do without her sheet anchor?"

The young dominie made an impressive pause. Intense quiet prevailed throughout the house for as much as thirty seconds. A pin drop could have been heard anywhere in the room.

Then, up in the gallery, a blue-jacketed "salt" arose and bellowed: "Ahoy there, mate! what good would a sheet anchor do with five miles of water under the old tub?"—OSCAR H. HAWLEY.


**Sore Throat**

**Hoarseness, Quinsy, Tonsilitis Laryngitis and other throat troubles quickly relieved and promptly cured by the use of**

**Hydrozone**

This scientific germicide is used and endorsed by leading physicians everywhere. It is ***absolutely harmless,*** yet a most powerful healing agent.

By killing the germs that cause these diseases, without injury to the tissue, Hydrozone cures the patient. Sold by Leading Druggists. If not at yours, will send bottle, prepaid, on receipt of 25 cents.

Prof. Charles Marchand

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**PRICES REDUCED FOR 60 DAYS!**

$4.00 VAPOR BATH CABINET, **$2.25** each
$5.00 QUAKER " " **3.50** each
$10.00 " " " **6.10** each
$1.00 Face and Head Steaming Attach **65c**
Quality best. Guaranteed. $2. Book **FREE** with all "Quakers." Write for our **New Catalogue.** Special 60-Day Offer. **Don't** miss it. Your last chance. **New plan, new prices to agents, salesmen, managers.** Hustlers getting rich. Wonderful sellers. Plenty territory.
**World Mfg. Co., 97 World Bldg., Cincinnati, O.**

## Loquacity.

A knight of Florence, whose love of talking was a common theme of lamentation among his friends, met one evening at supper, a party of brother patricians. As soon as supper was over, he began telling a story, and seemed as if he would never have done with it.

"I'll tell you what," said one of the party, interrupting him, "who ever told you this story, Sir Knight, did not tell you the whole of it."

"How could that be?" asked the knight. "I know every word of it."

"No, no," rejoined the speaker, "he did not tell you, I am sure, the end of it."

The company laughed, and the story-teller, confounded with the rebuke, made an abrupt termination of his discourse.—Selected from Percy's Anecdotes by Dr. B. Israeli.

## An Anecdote of "Bob" Taylor.

During "Bob" Taylor's first term as Governor of Tennessee, a citizen of Nashville called on him at his office in the Capitol, announcing himself as John Wesley Gaines.

"Good morning, Mr. Gaines—glad to see you," said the genial Governor. "Have a chair."

"I'm a son-in-law of Col. Cole," said Mr. Gaines.

"Have two chairs, Mr. Gaines, have two chairs."—MRS. T. A. JORDAN, Atlanta, Ga.

## Ist Das Alles?

Belle, a little girl entirely unfamiliar with the German language, made a purchase in a market where I happened to be. Mr. Schmidt, the clerk, wanting to know if the one article was all the child wanted, said "Ist das alles?" The child (thinking he referred to her sister Alice and what a German he must be not to be able to say Alice any plainer) immediately answered saying "No, my name is Belle, Alice is my sister."—J. B. O. Cook, New York City.

CHILDREN TEETHING

THE BEST OF ALL AND

For over sixty years MRS. WINSLOW'S SOOTHING SYRUP has been used by mothers for their children while teething. Are you disturbed at night and broken of your rest by a sick child suffering and crying with pain of Cutting Teeth? If so, send at once and get a bottle of "Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup" for Children Teething. Its value is incalculable. It will relieve the poor little sufferer immediately. Depend upon it, mothers, there is no mistake about it. It cures diarrhœa, regulates the Stomach and Bowels, cures Wind Colic, softens the Gums, reduces Inflammation, and gives tone and energy to the whole system. "Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup" for children teething is pleasant to the taste and is the prescription of one of the oldest and best female physicians and nurses in the United States, and is for sale by all druggists throughout the world. Price, twenty-five cents a bottle. Be sure and ask for "MRS. WINSLOW'S SOOTHING SYRUP."

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Famous Puritan Water Still. Over 72,000 already sold. Placed over the kitchen stove, it purifies the foulest water. Removes every impurity. Furnishes delicious distilled Pure Water. Beats filters. Saves lives and Dr. bills. Prevents Typhoid Malaria, other fevers, sickness. Only safe water for children. Cures disease. Write for Booklet and testimonials free. Agents Wanted—Men and Women—BIG WAGES.

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TWO MONTHS

is a long time for a clock to run on one winding. A Prentiss Clock does this and keeps perfect time too. It is strong, substantial, reliable, in fact satisfactory in every way. Right in time; right in price. Also Frying-pan, Program, Electric and *Synchronized* Clocks.

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"Carriages without horses shall go"

# THE OLDSMOBILE "GOES"

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*"The Best Thing on Wheels"*

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Each working part is made from materials of the highest grade finished and fitted with mathematical accuracy. The entire construction is simple, practical and easily understood-no complications-*"Nothing to watch but the road."* The premier position of the Oldsmobile is maintained by progress—its sterling merit is the result of 23 years of practical experience in gasolene motor and automobile construction. The pioneer Runabout of America and the most widely imitated Automobile in the world.

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**Detroit, Mich.**

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DO YOU SUPPOSE that a company with a capital of $500,000.00 paid in full, and the proud reputation of 37 years of continuous success, would make such an offer and not carry it out to the letter?

DO YOU SUPPOSE we would injure our standing with the public and our chance, of still greater success by failing to fulfil our offer?

DO YOU SUPPOSE we would make such an offer if we did not have the utmost confidence in the satisfying quality of our goods?

WE KNOW we can please you and save you money, for HAYNER WHISKEY goes direct from our own distillery to you, with all its original strength, richness and flavor, carries a UNITED STATES REGISTERED DISTILLER'S GUARANTEE of PURITY and AGE and saves you the big profits of the dealers. That's why it's best for medicinal purposes and preferred for other uses. That's why we are regularly supplying half a million satisfied customers. That's why YOU should try it. Your money back if you're not satisfied.

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**EXPRESS CHARGES PAID BY US.**

We will send you **FOUR FULL QUARTS of HAYNER SEVEN-YEAR-OLD RYE for $3.20,** and we will pay the express charges. When you receive the whiskey, try it and then if you don't find it all right and as good as you ever drank or can buy from anybody else at any price, you may send it back at our expense and your $3.20 will be returned to you by next mail. How could an offer be fairer? We stand all the expense, if the goods do not please you. Won't you let send you a trial order? We ship in a plain sealed case; no marks or brands to even suggest contents.

Orders for Ariz., Cal., Col., Idado, Mont., Nev., N. Mex., Ore., Utah, Wash., or Wyo., must be on the basis of **4 Quarts** for **$4.00** by **Express Prepaid** or **20 Quarts** for **$16.00** by **Freight Prepaid.**

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HOLIDAY NUMBER

Vol. XLIX. No. 1.

January, 1903

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# Short Stories

The Current Literature Publishing Company
34 West 26th Street, New York
And 10 Norfolk Street, Strand, London, England

THE SEVEN AGES
THROUGH WHICH
MEN
AND
WOMEN
USE
HAND
SAPOLIO
FOR TOILET AND BATH
HAND SAPOLIO FOR TOILET & BATH
IT HELPED US ALWAYS AND IT HELPS US STILL
It is soft and smooth and bland.
Keeps the skin in perfect condition.
Works miracles in preventing chapping and roughness

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ONLY DIRECT ALL WATER ROUTE BETWEEN

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is the only dentifrice commended by thousands of dentists, and officially endorsed by the Dental Profession. It cleans the teeth, heals and hardens the gums, sweetens the breath, and also by destroying the bacteria of the mouth it preserves the teeth, thus really becoming

## Tooth Insurance.

**It is sold by the druggist at 25 cts. per tube. Accept no substitution, be careful to get the genuine. There is nothing as good as the best. If your druggist does not keep it, kindly send us his name and address, and we will supply you, postpaid, at the regular price, 25 cents per tube.**

MADE ONLY BY THE

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# ST. DENIS HOTEL

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The Convenient Location, Tasteful Appointment, Reasonable Charges, Courteous Attendance and Cuisine of Exceptional Excellence are Characteristics of This Hotel, and Have Secured and Retained for it a Patronage of the Highest Order.

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Sample pair, by mail, 25c.

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**Delightful After Bathing, A Luxury After Shaving**

A positive relief for **Chapped Hands, Chafing,** and all afflictions of the skin. Removes all odor of perspiration. Get **Mennen's** (the original), *a little higher in price, perhaps, than worthless substitutes, but here's a reason for it.* Sold everywhere, or mailed for **25 cents.**

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Vol. XLIX. No. 2. February, 1903 Price, 25 Cts. $2.50 a Year.

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# Short Stories

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You can get *twice* the value out of your toilet, *twice* the life and vim out of your bath,—in fact, a delightful Turkish bath sensation,—and at ten, yes, twenty times the saving if you have

# HAND SAPOLIO

## FOR TOILET AND BATH

Besides all this, you will think twice as much of the Sapolios if you will add a cake of this remarkable toilet soap to your outfit. It is safe for a child's skin, and sure for the mechanic's grime. Keeps the skin soft and prevents chapping.

YOU CAN'T GUESS AT ITS VALUE.
BUY A CAKE AND TEST IT. IT'S A WONDER.

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The **Delicious Quality, Delightful Flavors,** and **Perfect Purity** of these famous confections have made for them a phenomenal popularity.

## Annual Sales Eight Million Packages

Lowney's Candies in the original sealed packages are Guaranteed to be in perfect condition or money refunded.
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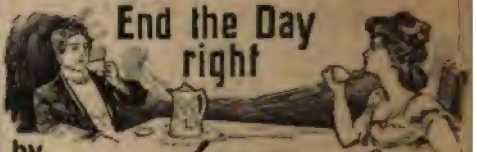


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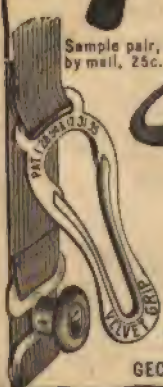


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# Short Stories

The Current Literature Publishing Company
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I'm awful glad that those good men
Made Hand Sapolio,
Because it's just the stuff for boys,
My mamma told me so.

When in the dirt I used to play
(And sometimes in it fall),
Mamma would say, "Look at that grime!
It won't come off at all."

Or when, if just by accident,
I got in tar or ink,
Mamma would sometimes get a switch
To help to make me think.

But now she often quite forgets
About the switch, but low
I hear her say, "Oh, thank the Fates
For Hand Sapolio!"

# HAND SAPOLIO

IS UNLIKE ANY OTHER SOAP IN EXISTENCE

## SOFT SMOOTH BLAND

Keeps the skin in perfect condition.
Works miracles in preventing
roughness and chapping

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5¢ 5¢

Fits every hand

Fit for any hand

## A Complexion Reflection

FAIRY SOAP makes white hands and faces.

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It is pure white and remains so as long as it lasts. The price is but 5 cents—each cake wrapped and packed in a separate carton.

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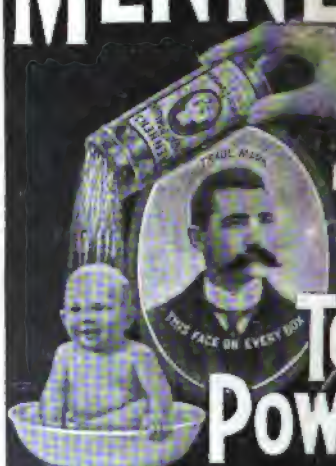


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IN A CUP OF
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BREAKFAST
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Unlike
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The full flavor, the delicious quality, the absolute Purity of Lowney's Breakfast Cocoa, distinguish it from all others.
No "treatment" with alkalies; no adulteration with flour, starch, or ground cocoa shells; nothing but the nutritive and digestible products of the choicest Cocoa Beans.
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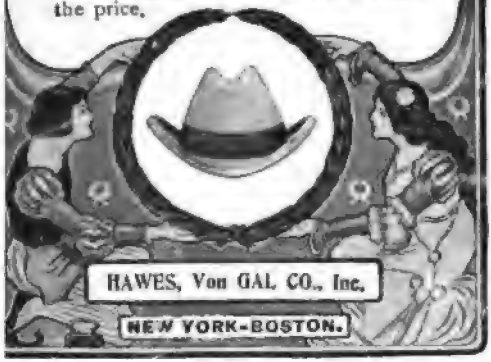
So'd through agencies everywhere with guarantee of better satisfaction than comes with hats offered at nearly twice the price.



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# We Mean FAIRY SOAP, of Course!

A Soap that is pure, for skins that are tender. Makes a copious, creamy lather and never turns yellow in use. White and Floating. Fits every hand; fit for any hand. Price 5 cents at your grocery or drug store.

**FREE!** Send us ten Fairy Soap oval box fronts (or if you prefer, 25c in stamps) and we will forward you a handsome portfolio of ten beautiful little "Fairy" subjects (one of which is shown above in reduced form). These pictures are artistic reproductions from photographs and will be admired and preserved by all lovers of children. Size 9½ inches by 12½ inches, FREE FROM ALL ADVERTISING MATTER, ready for framing.

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**Twenty Years' Test**

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are the most artistic, economical, and preservative colorings for shingles and other rough woodwork. Thousands have investigated, used and endorsed them. They cost one-half less than paint, wear as well, and preserve the wood better. Samples of all colors on wood, with catalogue and sketches, sent free on request.

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Send 50c. for Silk, 25c. for Cotton, Sample Pair.

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REFUSE ALL SUBSTITUTES



# MENNEN'S

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# Short Stories

The Current Literature Publishing Company
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To lave my lady's dainty hands
Are brought the soaps of many lands,
But out of all the shining row
SHE CHOOSES
HAND SAPOLIO

FOR THE TOILET & BATH

# HAND SAPOLIO

Its steady use will keep the hands of any busy woman as white and pretty as if she was under the constant care of a manicure. It is truly the "Dainty Woman's Friend."

# Have you a little "FAIRY" in your home?

# We Mean FAIRY SOAP, of Course!

FAIRY SOAP (the oval cake) is so much handier than the old style, awkward
usive oblong bar. Besides it's the purest white floating soap possible to make—and i
btainable at the lowest price possible to pay—5 cents; at grocers' and druggists'.

**REE!** Send us ten Fairy Soap oval box fronts (or if you prefer, 25c in stamps) and we will forward you a han
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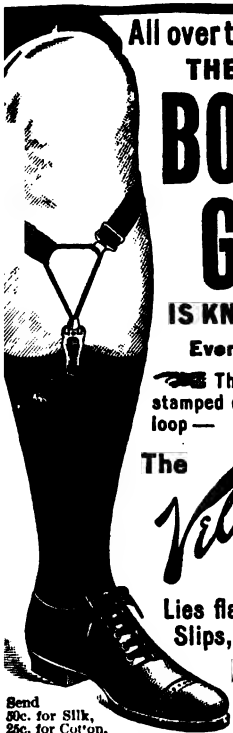

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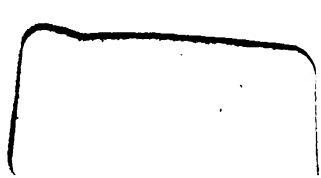
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